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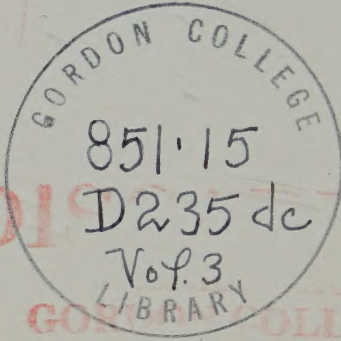


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## Charles Eliot Norton

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HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW: A Sketch  
of his Life. With portrait.

DANTE'S DIVINE COMEDY. Translated by PROFESSOR  
NORTON. With Notes. Vol. I. Hell. Vol. II.  
Purgatory. Vol. III. Paradise.

DANTE'S THE NEW LIFE. Translated by PROFESSOR  
NORTON.

NOTES OF TRAVEL AND STUDY IN ITALY.

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*Edited by Professor Norton*

THE LOVE POEMS OF JOHN DONNE. *Riverside  
Press Edition.* 500 copies.

LETTERS FROM RALPH WALDO EMERSON TO  
A FRIEND, 1838-1853.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THOMAS CARLYLE AND  
RALPH WALDO EMERSON 2 vols.

LETTERS OF JOHN RUSKIN TO CHARLES ELIOT  
NORTON. 2 vols.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

# PARADISE



THE DIVINE COMEDY  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI.

TRANSLATED BY  
CHARLES ELIOT NORTON.

REVISED EDITION.

III.  
PARADISE.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
*The Riverside Press Cambridge*

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## CONTENTS

### CANTO I

Proem. — Invocation. — Beatrice, and Dante transhumanized, ascend through the Sphere of Fire toward the Moon. — Beatrice explains the cause of their ascent . . . . . I

### CANTO II

Proem. — Ascent to the Moon. — The cause of Spots on the Moon. — Influence of the Heavens . . . 10

### CANTO III

The Heaven of the Moon. — Spirits whose vows had been broken. — Piccarda Donati. — The Empress Constance . . . . . 19

### CANTO IV

Doubts of Dante, respecting the justice of Heaven and the abode of the blessed, solved by Beatrice. — Question of Dante as to the possibility of reparation for broken vows . . . . . 26

### CANTO V

The sanctity of vows, and the seriousness with which they are to be made or changed. — Ascent to the Heaven of Mercury. — The shade of Justinian . . 34

## CANTO VI

Justinian tells of his own life. — The story of the Roman Eagle. — Spirits in the planet Mercury. —  
 Romeo . . . . . 41

## CANTO VII

Discourse of Beatrice. — The Fall of Man. — The scheme of his Redemption . . . . . 49

## CANTO VIII

Ascent to the Heaven of Venus. — Spirits of Lovers. — Charles Martel. — His discourse on the order and the varieties in mortal things . . . . . 56

## CANTO IX

The planet Venus. — Conversation of Dante with Cunizza da Romano. — With Folco of Marseilles. — Rahab. — Avarice of the Papal Court . . . . . 66

## CANTO X

Ascent to the Sun. — Spirits of the wise, and the learned in theology. — St. Thomas Aquinas. — He names to Dante those who surround him . . . . . 76

## CANTO XI

The Vanity of worldly desires. — St. Thomas Aquinas undertakes to solve two doubts perplexing Dante. — He narrates the life of St. Francis of Assisi . . . . . 85

## CANTO XII

Second circle of the spirits of wise religious men, doctors of the Church and teachers. — St. Bonaventura

## CONTENTS

v

narrates the life of St. Dominic, and tells the names  
of those who form the circle with him . . . . 93

### CANTO XIII

St. Thomas Aquinas speaks again, and explains the  
relation of the wisdom of Solomon to that of Adam  
and of Christ, and declares the vanity of human  
judgment . . . . . 102

### CANTO XIV

At the prayer of Beatrice, Solomon tells of the glori-  
fied body of the blessed after the Last Judgment. —  
Ascent to the Heaven of Mars. — Spirits of the Sol-  
diery of Christ in the form of a Cross with the figure  
of Christ thereon. — Hymn of the Spirits . . . 111

### CANTO XV

Dante is welcomed by his ancestor, Cacciaguida. — Cac-  
ciaguida tells of his family, and of the simple life of  
Florence in the old days . . . . . 118

### CANTO XVI

The boast of blood. — Cacciaguida continues his dis-  
course concerning the old and the new Florence . . 126

### CANTO XVII

Dante questions Cacciaguida as to his fortunes. — Cac-  
ciaguida replies, foretelling the exile of Dante, and  
the renown of his Poem . . . . . 137

### CANTO XVIII

The Spirits in the Cross of Mars. — Ascent to the  
Heaven of Jupiter. — Words shaped in light upon

the planet by the Spirits. — Denunciation of the avarice of the Popes . . . . .	144
---	-----

## CANTO XIX

The voice of the Eagle. — It speaks of the mysteries of Divine justice ; of the necessity of Faith for salvation ; of the sins of certain kings . . . . .	151
---	-----

## CANTO XX

The song of the Just. — Princes who have loved righteousness, in the eye of the Eagle. — Spirits, once Pagans, in bliss. — Faith and Salvation. — Predestination . . . . .	159
--	-----

## CANTO XXI

Ascent to the Heaven of Saturn. — Spirits of those who had given themselves to devout contemplation. — The Golden Stairway. — St. Peter Damian. — Predestination. — The luxury of modern Prelates. — Dante alarmed by a cry of the spirits . . . . .	166
--	-----

## CANTO XXII

Beatrice reassures Dante. — St. Benedict appears. — He tells of the founding of his Order, and of the falling away of its brethren. — Beatrice and Dante ascend to the Starry Heaven. — The constellation of the Twins. — Sight of the Earth . . . . .	173
--	-----

## CANTO XXIII

The Triumph of Christ . . . . .	180
---------------------------------	-----

## CANTO XXIV

St. Peter examines Dante concerning Faith, and approves his answer . . . . .	186
--	-----

## CANTO XXV

St. James examines Dante concerning Hope. — St. John appears, with a brightness so dazzling as to deprive Dante, for the time, of sight . . . . . 193

## CANTO XXVI

St. John examines Dante concerning Love. — Dante's sight restored. — Adam appears, and answers questions put to him by Dante . . . . . 201

## CANTO XXVII

Denunciation by St. Peter of his degenerate successors. — Dante gazes upon the Earth. — Ascent of Beatrice and Dante to the Crystalline Heaven. — Its nature. — Beatrice rebukes the covetousness of mortals . . . . . 208

## CANTO XXVIII

The Heavenly Hierarchy . . . . . 216

## CANTO XXIX

Discourse of Beatrice concerning the creation and nature of the Angels. — She reproves the presumption and foolishness of preachers . . . . . 223

## CANTO XXX

Ascent to the Empyrean. — The River of Light. — The celestial Rose. — The seat of Henry VII. — The last words of Beatrice . . . . . 231

## CANTO XXXI

The Rose of Paradise. — St. Bernard. — Prayer to Beatrice. — The glory of the Blessed Virgin . . . . . 238

## CANTO XXXII

St. Bernard describes the order of the Rose, and points  
 out many of the Saints. — The children in Para-  
 dise. — The angelic festival. — The patricians of  
 the Court of Heaven . . . . . 244

## CANTO XXXIII

Prayer to the Virgin. — The Beatific Vision. — The  
 Ultimate Salvation . . . . . 252



# PARADISE

## CANTO I

*Proem. — Invocation. — Beatrice, and Dante transhumanized, ascend through the Sphere of Fire toward the Moon. — Beatrice explains the cause of their ascent.*

THE glory of Him who moves everything penetrates through the universe, and is resplendent in one part more and in another less. In the heaven which receives most of His light I have been,<sup>1</sup> and have seen things which he who descends from thereabove neither knows how nor has power to recount; because, drawing near to its own desire,<sup>2</sup> our intellect enters so deep, that the memory cannot follow after. Truly whatever of the Holy Realm I could treasure up in my mind shall now be the theme of my song.

O good Apollo, for this last labor make me such a vessel of thy worth as thou demandest

1. v. 5. The Empyrean. See Dante's *Letter to Can Grande*, §§ 24, 25.

2. v. 7. The innate desire of the soul is to attain the vision of God, in which "ultimate and perfect beatitude consists." *S. T.* ii.<sup>1</sup> 3. 8.

for the gift of the beloved laurel.<sup>3</sup> Thus far one summit of Parnassus has been enough for me, but now with both<sup>4</sup> I need to enter the remaining arena. Enter into my breast, and breathe thou in such wise as when thou drewest Marsyas from out the sheath of his limbs.<sup>5</sup> O divine Power, if thou lend thyself to me so that I may make manifest the image of the Blessed Realm imprinted within my head, thou shalt see me come to thy chosen tree, and crown myself then with those leaves of which the theme and thou will make me worthy. So rarely, Father, are they gathered for triumph or of Caesar or of poet, (fault and shame of human wills,) that the Peneian leaf<sup>6</sup> should bring forth joy unto the joyous Delphic deity,

3. v. 15. So inspire me in this labor that I may deserve the gift of the laurel.

4. v. 17. Parnassus (see Lucan, *Phars.* v. 72) was supposed to have two peaks, and Dante here assumes that the Muses dwelt upon one, Apollo upon the other. At the opening of the preceding parts of his poem Dante has invoked the Muses only. The allegorical meaning seems to be that the teaching of the reason and the light of Philosophy have sufficed for him thus far in his poem, but that now, in treating of things supersensual, he requires also the Divine grace and the guidance of Theology.

5. v. 21. As thou drewest Marsyas from the sheath of his limbs, so draw me from human limitations.

6. v. 32. Daphne, who was changed to the laurel, was the daughter of Peneus.

whenever it makes any one to long for it. Great flame follows a little spark : perhaps after me prayer shall be made with better voices, whereto Cyrrha' may respond.

The lamp of the world rises to mortals through different passages, but from that which joins four circles with three crosses it issues with better course and conjoined with a better star, and it tempers and seals the mundane wax more after its own fashion.<sup>8</sup> Almost such a passage had made morning there and evening here ;<sup>9</sup> and there all that hemisphere was white,

7. v. 36. Cyrrha, a city on the Crissaeen gulf, sacred to Apollo, not far from the foot of Parnassus, and here used as synonymous with Delphi, of which it was the port.

8. v. 42. At the vernal equinox the sun rises from a point on the horizon where the four great circles, namely, the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colure, meet, and, cutting each other, form three crosses. The sun is in the sign of Aries, "a better star," because the influence of this constellation was supposed to be benignant, and under it the earth reclothes itself. It was the season assigned to the Creation and to the Annunciation.

9. v. 44. There, in the Earthly Paradise ; here, on earth. The vernal equinox (according to the calendar) being a few days passed, the sun had entered not by the precise passage described in the preceding verses, but "almost" by it.

The last indication of time given in the *Purgatory* is in the last canto, in the words : "the sun was holding the circle

and the other part black, when I saw Beatrice turned to her left side, and gazing upon the sun : never did eagle so fix himself upon it. And even as a second ray is wont to issue from

of the meridian," v. 104, at the moment when the seven ladies stopped before the fount from which the Euphrates and the Tigris were issuing. Then follows a brief conversation, after which Matilda takes Dante to the Eunoë, of which he drinks, and whence he returns to Beatrice "pure and disposed to mount unto the stars." It would seem natural that the ascent to them should at once begin. But the verses in this canto, describing the passage of the sun at its rising, have led many interpreters of the poem to believe that they indicate sunrise as the hour of the ascent, and that, consequently, a period of about eighteen hours elapses, unaccounted for, between the last scene of Purgatory and the first of Paradise. This view seems to derive confirmation from the words, "such a passage had made morning here and evening there."

But it is perhaps better to hold with other commentators, that no long interval passed between the draught of Eunoë and the ascent to Paradise ; that the description of the passage of the sun is not to be taken as defining the hour, but simply as indicating the favorable season ; and that by morning and evening are meant the time from sunrise to noon, and from sunset to midnight. If this be the correct interpretation, the ascent of Dante and Beatrice to the Heavens was at noon, the appropriate hour for the entrance to Paradise. The entrance to Hell had been at nightfall ; to Purgatory at dawn, the hour of hope ; and now the entrance to Paradise is at noon, when the Sun is in full glory. "The sixth hour, that is, midday," says Dante in the *Convito* (iv. 23, 145), "is the most noble hour of the whole day, and has the most power."

the first, and mount upward again, like a pilgrim who wishes to return; so from her action, infused through the eyes into my imagination, mine was made, and I fixed my eyes upon the sun beyond our wont. Much is permitted there which here is not permitted to our faculties, by virtue of the place made for the human race as its proper seat.<sup>10</sup> Not long did I endure it, nor so little that I did not see it sparkle round about, like iron that issues boiling from the fire. And on a sudden,<sup>11</sup> day seemed to be added to day, as if He who has the power had adorned the heaven with another sun.

Beatrice was standing with her eyes wholly fixed on the eternal wheels, and on her I fixed my eyes from thereabove removed. Looking at her I inwardly became such as Glaucus<sup>12</sup> became on tasting of the grass which made him consort in the sea of the other gods. Transhumanizing cannot be signified in words; therefore let the example<sup>13</sup> suffice him for whom

10. v. 57. The Earthly Paradise, made for man in his original excellence as his proper abode.

11. v. 61. So rapid was his ascent as he was drawn upward, following Beatrice, through the gleaming sphere of fire, which was supposed to be between the sphere of the air and that of the moon.

12. v. 68. A fisherman changed to a sea-god. The story is in Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, xiii. 943-949).

13. v. 71. Just cited, of Glaucus.

grace reserves the experience. If I was only that of me which thou didst the last create,<sup>14</sup> O Love that governest the heavens, Thou knowest, who with Thy light didst lift me. When the revolution which Thou, being desired, makest eternal,<sup>15</sup> made me attent unto itself with the harmony which Thou dost attune and modulate, so much of the heaven then seemed to me enkindled by the flame of the sun, that rain or river never made so widespread a lake.

The novelty of the sound and the great light kindled in me a desire concerning their cause, never before felt with such keenness. Whereon she, who saw me as I see myself, to quiet my perturbed mind opened her mouth, ere I mine to ask, and began: "Thou thyself makest thyself dull with false imagining, so that thou seest

14. v. 73. In the twenty-fifth Canto of *Purgatory*, Dante has said that when the articulation of the brain is perfect God breathes into it a new spirit, the living soul; and he means here that, like St. Paul, he was caught up into Heaven, and cannot tell "whether in the body or out of the body" (2 *Corinthians* xii. 3).

15. v. 76. The desire to be united with God is the source of the eternal revolution of the heavens. "The Empyrean . . . is the cause of the most swift motion of the First Moving Heaven, because of the most ardent desire of every part of the latter to be conjoined with every part of that most divine and quiet heaven." *Convito*, ii. 4, 19-25.



not what thou wouldst see, if thou hadst shaken it off. Thou art not on earth, as thou believest; but lightning, flying from its proper site, never ran as thou who art returning thereunto.”<sup>16</sup>

If I was divested of my first doubt by these brief little smiled-out words, within a new one was I the more enmeshed. And I said: “Already I rested content concerning a great wonder; but now I wonder how I can transcend these light bodies.” Whereon she, after a pitying sigh, directed her eyes toward me, with that look which a mother turns on her delirious child, and she began: “All things whatsoever have order among themselves; and this is the form which makes the universe like unto God.”<sup>17</sup> Herein the exalted creatures<sup>18</sup> see the imprint of the Eternal Power, which is the end for which the aforesaid rule is made. In the order of which I speak, all natures are disposed, by

16. v. 93. To thine own proper site, — Heaven, the true home of the soul.

17. v. 105. The order of the created universe is the outward manifestation of the ideas of God, and that which God chiefly intends in created things is the good which consists in likeness to Himself. See *S. T.* i. 45. 3; 50. 1. The whole of this discourse of Beatrice is closely conformed to the teaching of the *Summa Theologiae*.

18. v. 106. The created beings endowed with souls, — angels and men.

diverse lots, more or less near to their source ;<sup>19</sup> wherefore they are moved to different ports over the great sea of being, and each with the instinct given to it which bears it on. This bears the fire upward toward the moon ; this is the motive force in mortal hearts ; this binds together and unites the earth. Nor does this bow shoot forth<sup>20</sup> only the created things which are without intelligence, but also those which have understanding and love. The Providence that ordains all this, makes always quiet with its own light the heaven<sup>21</sup> within which that one which has the greatest speed revolves. And thither now, as to a site decreed, the virtue of that bowstring is bearing us on, which directs to a joyful mark whatever it shoots. It is true, that as the form often does not accord with the intention of the art, because the material is deaf to respond, so the creature sometimes deviates from this course ; for it has

19. v. 111. The likeness to God is participated by different things in different modes, and their common inclination to the universal good varies with their different modes of being. See *S. T.* i. 45. 3 ; 49. 1.

20. v. 119. This instinct directs to their proper end animate as well as inanimate things, as the bow shoots the arrow to its mark.

21. v. 122. The Empyrean, within which the Crystalline heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, the first and swiftest of the moving heavens, revolves.

power, though thus impelled, to bend in another direction (even as the fire of a cloud may be seen to fall<sup>22</sup>), if the first impetus, diverted by false pleasure, turn it earthwards. Thou shouldst not, if I deem aright, wonder more at thy ascent, than at a stream if it descends from a high mountain to the base. It would be a marvel in thee, if, deprived of hindrance, thou hadst sat below, even as quiet in living fire on earth would be."

Thereon she turned again her face toward heaven.

22. v. 133. Contrary to its true nature.

## CANTO II

*Proem. — Ascent to the Moon. — The cause of Spots on the Moon. — Influence of the Heavens.*

O YE who in a little bark, desirous to listen, have followed behind my craft which singing passes on, turn to see again your shores; put not out upon the deep; for haply, losing me, ye would remain astray. The water which I take was never crossed. Minerva breathes,<sup>1</sup> and Apollo guides me, and nine Muses point out to me the Bears.

Ye other few, who have lifted up your necks betimes for the bread of the Angels, on which one here subsists,<sup>2</sup> but never becomes sated of it, ye may well put forth your vessel over the deep brine, keeping my wake before you on the water which turns smooth again. Those glorious ones who passed over to Colchos wondered not when they saw Jason become a ploughman, as ye shall do.<sup>3</sup>

1. v. 8. The breath of Minerva fills the sails.

2. v. 12. Here on earth this bread is the true food of the soul. "Oh, blessed those few who sit at that table where the bread of the Angels is eaten." *Convito*, i. 1. 51.

3. v. 18. When, to obtain the golden fleece, Jason

The concreate and perpetual thirst for the deiform realm<sup>4</sup> was bearing us on swift almost as ye see the heavens. Beatrice was gazing upward, and I upon her, and perhaps in such time as a quarrel<sup>5</sup> rests, and flies, and from the notch is unlocked,<sup>6</sup> I saw myself arrived where a wonderful thing drew my sight to itself; and therefore she, from whom the working of my mind could not be hid, turning toward me, glad as beautiful, said to me: "Uplift thy grateful mind to God, who has united us with the first star."<sup>7</sup>

It seemed to me that a cloud had covered us, lucid, dense, solid, and polished, as if a diamond which the sun had struck. Within itself the eternal pearl had received us, even as water receives a ray of light, remaining undivided. If I was body (and here<sup>8</sup> it is not conceivable how

joked the two fire-breathing oxen, and ploughed with them, sowing the dragon's teeth in the furrows. See Ovid, *Metam.* vii. 104-122.

4. v. 20. That instinct of which Beatrice has spoken in the preceding canto.

5. v. 23. The bolt for a cross-bow.

6. v. 24. The inverse order indicates the instantaneousness of the act.

7. v. 30. The moon.

8. v. 37. On earth, by mortal faculties. "The body in glory will pass through the spheres of the heavens, without division of them, not because of its subtilty, but by divine virtue." *S. T. Suppl.* 85. 2.

one dimension brooked another, which needs must be if body enter body), the desire ought the more to kindle us to see that Essence, in which is seen how our nature and God were united. There will be seen that which we hold by faith, not demonstrated, but it will be known of itself like the first truth which man believes.<sup>9</sup>

I replied: "My Lady, devoutly, to the utmost that I can, do I thank Him who has removed me from the mortal world. But tell me, what are the dusky marks of this body, which there below on earth make people fable about Cain?"<sup>10</sup>

She smiled a little, and then she said to me: "If the opinion of mortals errs where the key of sense does not unlock, surely the shafts of

9. v. 45. Not demonstrated by argument, but known by direct cognition, like the self-evident primary truths, first principles, *per se nota*.

10. v. 51. Fancying the dark spaces on the surface of the moon to represent Cain carrying a thorn-bush for the fire of his sacrifice. In the ascent to the Empyrean each sphere is, as it were, a step in the attainment of knowledge of divine things, in which Dante is instructed by Beatrice, or by the spirits that appear to him. The questions solved are not asked casually, but are appropriate to the nature of the sphere and its place in the scheme of the universe. In this lowest sphere the question relates to a mere physical phenomenon, but the explanation of it gives opportunity to Beatrice to expound the whole doctrine of the influences of the heavens.



wonder ought not to pierce thee now, since thou seest that the reason following the senses has short wings. But tell me what thou thyself thinkest of it." And I: "That which up here appears to us diverse, I believe is caused by bodies rare and dense." And she: "Surely thou shalt see that thy belief is quite submerged in error, if thou listen well to the argument that I shall make against it. The eighth sphere<sup>11</sup> displays to you many lights, which may be noted of different aspects in quality and quantity. If rarity and density effected all this,<sup>12</sup> one single virtue, more or less or equally distributed, would be in all. Different virtues must needs be fruits of formal principles;<sup>13</sup> and

11. v. 64. The heaven of the fixed stars.

12. v. 67. If all this difference in the stars were caused merely by difference in rarity and density, which Dante had supposed to be the cause of the difference in the aspect of the moon.

13. v. 71. The argument, which is much condensed, is as follows: The stars differ in quality and quantity of brightness one from another; if the rarity and density of their substance were the exclusive cause of this difference there would be but one virtue in them. But they exercise various influences, their virtues differ. These virtues result from formal principles, that is, from the principles which determine the form or specific being of their material substance. Hence, their virtues being various, the formal principles must be various, and it follows that differences in aspect cannot be accounted for solely by the principles of rarity and density.

these, all but one, would, in pursuance of thy reasoning, be destroyed. Further, if rarity were the cause of that duskiness about which you ask,<sup>14</sup> this planet would either be thus deficient of its matter in part quite through and through, or else, as a body divides the fat and the lean, so this would interchange the leaves in its volume. If the first were the case, it would be manifest in the eclipses of the sun, by the shining through of the light, as when it is poured upon any other rare body. This is not so; therefore we must look at the other supposition, and if it happen that I quash this, thy opinion will be proved false. If it be that this rarity does not pass through,<sup>15</sup> there must needs be a limit, beyond which its contrary allows it not to pass farther; and thence the ray from another body is thrown back, just as color returns through a glass which hides lead behind itself. Now thou wilt say that the ray

14. v. 74. The reason why the rarity was supposed to be the cause of the dark spots in the moon is stated by Dante in the *Convito* (ii. 14. 70-77): "If the Moon be well observed two things are seen peculiar to it. . . . One is the shadow in it which is nothing but the rarity of its body, in which the rays of the sun cannot terminate, and be reflected as in the other parts. The other is the variation of its brightness."

15. v. 85. Does not extend quite through the substance of the moon.

shows itself dimmer there than in the other parts, because it is reflected there from farther back. From this objection experiment, which is wont to be the fountain to the streams of your arts, may deliver thee, if ever thou try it. Thou shalt take three mirrors, and set two of them at an equal distance from thee, and let the other, more remote, meet thine eyes between the first two. Turning toward them, cause a light to be placed behind thy back, which may shine upon the three mirrors, and return to thee reflected from all. Although the more distant image may not reach thee so great in quantity, thou wilt there see how it must needs be of equal brightness with the others.

“ Now, as beneath the blows of the warm rays that which lies under the snow remains bare both of the former color and the cold,<sup>16</sup> thee, thus remaining in thy intellect, will I inform with light so living that it shall tremble in its aspect to thee.” ●

“ Within the heaven of the divine peace revolves a body, in whose virtue lies the being

16. v. 108. The color of the snow and the cold disappear from the earth.

17. v. 111. My argument has removed the error which covered thy mind, and now I will tell thee the true cause of the variety in the aspect of the moon.

of all that it contains.<sup>18</sup> The following heaven,<sup>19</sup> which has so many sights, distributes that being through divers essences<sup>20</sup> distinct from it, and contained by it. The other circles, by various differences, dispose the distinctions which they have within themselves unto their ends and their sowings.<sup>21</sup> These organs of the world thus proceed, as thou now seest, from grade to grade; for they receive from above, and operate below. Observe me well, how I advance through this place to the truth which thou desirest, so that hereafter thou mayst know to keep the ford alone. The motion and the virtue of the holy spheres must needs be

18. v. 114. Within the motionless Empyrean revolves the Crystalline Heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, from whose virtue, communicated to it from the Empyrean, all the inferior spheres contained within it derive their special mode of being.

19. v. 115. The heaven of the Fixed Stars. "Although the Starry Heaven is uniform in its substance it has multiplicity in its virtue, by reason of which it must needs have that diversity in its parts which we see, in order that through different organs it may exert the influence of different virtues." *Quaestio de Aqua et Terra*, § 21.

20. v. 116. Through the planets, called essences because each has a specific mode of being.

21. v. 120. Each of the seven inferior heavens distributes its specific virtues in such wise as to secure their due ends, and to make them seed for the production of further effects. "The rays of the heavens are the way by which their virtue descends to the things below." *Convito*, ii. 7, 90.

inspired by blessed motors,<sup>22</sup> as the work of the hammer by the smith. And the heaven, which so many lights make beautiful, takes its image from the deep mind<sup>23</sup> which revolves it, and makes thereof a seal. And as the soul within your dust is diffused through different members, and conformed to divers potencies, so does the Intelligence<sup>24</sup> display its goodness multiplied through the stars, itself circling upon its own unity. Divers virtue makes divers alloy with the precious body that it quickens, wherein it is bound, even as life in you.<sup>25</sup> Because of the glad nature whence it flows, the mingled virtue shines through the body, as gladness through the living pupil. From this<sup>26</sup> comes what seems different between light and

22. v. 129. The blessed motors are the Orders of the angels, which are called Intelligences, as being the instruments through which the Divine Intelligence is transmitted to the created universe.

23. v. 131. The deep mind of the angelic motors, because it reflects the mind of God, and is actuated by it.

24. v. 136. The Angelic Intelligence. *Intelligence* is, probably, to be interpreted here a collective noun, used for the Order of the Angels who are the motors of the Heaven of the Fixed Stars. Cf. xxviii. 78.

25. v. 141. The divers virtues proceeding from God, through the instrumentality of the blessed motors or angelic Intelligences, produce different results in the different bodies which they quicken.

26. v. 145. From this diversity of virtues diversely diffused through the stars and the planets.

light, not from density and rarity ; this is the formal principle which produces, conformably with its own goodness, the dark and the bright.”<sup>27</sup>

27. v. 148. It may seem surprising to the reader on first becoming acquainted with the preceding canto, which has so little poetic charm, that Dante's first enquiry of Beatrice, after his overwhelming experience in entering the superterrestrial world, and his marvellous reception into the sphere of the Moon, should be concerning a mere physical phenomenon, and especially a matter so apparently trivial as the cause of the light and dark spots on the face of the Moon, and seemingly suggested to him only by finding himself in the body of the planet. But the surprise will vanish, and the intention of the poet will become manifest, on consideration of the full significance of the reply made by Beatrice. She begins with the lesson that in the supersensual world the evidence of the senses is not to be trusted, since even in the world of sense conclusions drawn from their evidence are often erroneous (vv. 52-105). She then proceeds to set forth the mode of operation of the Heavens, begun in the Crystalline Heaven, — the *Primum Mobile*, — and thence transmitted to the inferior spheres (vv. 112-123). But “their motion and their virtue,” from which the differences in themselves and the differences in the natures and aspects of mortal things proceed, are not inherent in themselves, but are inspired by angelic Intelligences, ministers of the Divine Will to carry out the Divine plan in the order of the Universe, and to impress upon it the image of the Divine idea (vv. 127-148).

Thus the apparently trivial question asked by Dante has led to an exposition of the Divine scheme of the Universe, requisite for the understanding of the nature of the realm into which the poet has been uplifted.

### CANTO III

*The Heaven of the Moon. — Spirits whose vows had been broken. — Piccarda Donati. — The Empress Constance.*

THAT sun which first had heated my breast with love had uncovered to me, proving and disproving, the sweet aspect of fair truth ; and I, to confess myself corrected and assured, so far as was needful raised my head more erect to speak. But a sight appeared which held me so fast to itself, to look on it, that I did not bethink me of my confession.

As through transparent and polished glasses, or through clear and tranquil waters, not so deep that their bed be lost, the lineaments of our faces return so faintly, that a pearl on a white brow comes not less readily to our eyes, such I saw many faces eager to speak ; wherefore I ran into the contrary error to that which kindled love between the man and the fountain.<sup>1</sup> At once,

I. v. 18. Narcissus conceived the image to be a true face ; Dante takes the real faces to be reflections of persons behind him. The spirits which appear here, and in the other



as soon as I was aware of them, supposing them mirrored faces, I turned round my eyes to see of whom they were, and saw nothing; and I turned them forward again, straight into the light of my sweet guide who, with a smile, was glowing in her holy eyes. "Do not wonder that I smile," she said to me, "at thy childish thought, since thy foot does not trust itself yet upon the truth, but turns thee, as it is wont, to emptiness. These which thou seest are real substances,<sup>2</sup> relegated here for failure in their

heavens successively, to welcome Dante, have temporarily left their seats in the Empyrean, in order to reveal to him the truths of utility or delight (see *Letter to Can Grande*, § 33) concerning which he needs or desires instruction. These truths deal mainly with relations of things human to things divine, not to the mysteries of heaven. In this the lowest sphere of all, typifying the lowest grade of bliss, the spirits are visible like fair ghosts, not wholly concealed by the radiance of their joy; in the next heaven, that of Mercury, the shining forms of the spirits are at first seen, but the one of them who speaks with Dante becomes hidden in the increasing effulgence which proceeds from the joy of love displayed in act toward the poet. In the heaven of Venus the spirits are completely swathed in light, and so from heaven to heaven their radiance becomes more and more dazzling and resplendent.

2. v. 29. These are not images, but real persons. A substance was, according to the schoolmen, a created being or thing possessing independent existence, "*essentia cui competit per se esse.*" S. T. i. 3. 5.



vows. Therefore speak with them, and hear, and believe; for the veracious light which satisfies them does not allow them to turn their feet from itself."

And I directed myself to the shade that seemed most eager to speak, and I began, like a man whom an excessive desire confuses: "O well-created spirit, who in the rays of life eternal art tasting the sweetness, which if not tasted is never understood, it will be gracious to me, if thou content me with thy name, and with your lot."<sup>3</sup> Whereon she promptly, and with smiling eyes: "Our charity does not lock its door to a just wish, any more than that<sup>4</sup> which wills that all its court be like itself. In the world I was a virgin Sister,<sup>5</sup> and if thy memory look back well, my being more beautiful will not conceal me from thee; but thou wilt recognize that I am Piccarda,<sup>6</sup> who, placed here with these other blessed ones, am blessed in the slowest sphere. Our affections, which are inflamed only

3. v. 41. "Your lot;" the "your" includes all the spirits who have presented themselves in the Moon.

4. v. 44. The Divine charity.

5. v. 46. A nun, of the order of St. Clare.

6. v. 49. The sister of Corso Donati and of Forese: see *Purgatory*, Canto xxiv. 10-15. It may not be without intention that the first blessed spirit whom Dante sees in Paradise is a relative of his own wife, Gemma dei Donati.

in the pleasure of the Holy Spirit, rejoice in being formed according to His order;<sup>7</sup> and this lot, which appears so far down, is given to us, because our vows were neglected and void in some particular." Whereon I to her: "In your marvellous aspects there shines I know not what divine which transmutes you from our former conceptions; therefore I was not swift in remembering;<sup>8</sup> but now that which thou sayest to me assists me, so that to reshape is easier to me. But tell me, ye who are happy here, do ye desire a more exalted place, in order to see more, or to make for yourselves more friends?" With those other shades she first smiled a little, then answered me so glad, that she seemed to burn in the first fire of love: "Brother, virtue of charity<sup>9</sup> quiets our will, and makes us wish only for that which we have, and quickens not our thirst for aught else. If we desired to be more on high, our desires would

7. v. 54. Rejoice in whatever grade of bliss is assigned to them in that order of the universe which is the form that makes it like unto God.

8. v. 61. Compare Dante's words to Ciacco, *Hell*, Canto vi. 43-45. In Hell anguish, in Paradise joy transfigures the spirits and makes recognition of them difficult.

9. v. 71. Charity, in the sense of love, quiets their will. "There is no envy among the saints, for each attains the end of his desire, which is proportioned to the goodness of his nature." *Convito*, iii. 15, 101-104.

be discordant with the will of Him who assigns us here, which thou wilt see is not possible in these circles, if to exist in charity is here of necessity, and if thou dost well consider its nature. Nay, it is the essence of this blessed existence to hold itself within the divine will, whereby our wills themselves are made one. So that as we are, from seat to seat throughout this realm, to all the realm is pleasing, as to the King who inwills us with His will; and His will is our peace; it is that sea whereunto everything is moving which It creates and which nature makes.”

Then was it clear to me, how everywhere in Heaven is Paradise, even if the grace of the Supreme Good does not there rain down in one measure.

But as it happens, if one food sates, and for another the appetite still remains, that this is asked for, and thanks returned for that; even thus did I, with act and with word, to learn from her, what was the web wherein she had not drawn the shuttle to the end.<sup>10</sup> “Perfect life and high desert enheaven a lady<sup>11</sup> higher up,”

10. v. 96. To learn from her what was the vow which she did not fulfil.

11. v. 98. Santa Clara, the friend of St. Francis, who, in 1212, established under his direction a religious order for virgins, of extreme austerity. The order bore her name, and

she said to me, "according to whose rule, in your world below, there are who vest and veil themselves, in order that, even till death, they may wake and sleep with that Spouse who accepts every vow which love conforms unto His pleasure. A young girl, I fled from the world to follow her, and in her garb I enclosed myself, and pledged me to the pathway of her Order. Afterward men, more used to ill than good, dragged me forth from the sweet cloister;<sup>12</sup> and God knows what then my life became. And this other splendor, which shows itself to thee at my right side, and which is enkindled with all the light of our sphere, understands of herself that which I say of me.<sup>13</sup> She was a Sister; and from her head in like manner the shadow of the sacred veil was taken. But after she too was returned unto the world, against her liking and against good usage, she was never loosed from the veil of the heart.<sup>14</sup> This is the light of the great Constance,<sup>15</sup> who spread widely through Europe. She died in 1253, and was canonized in 1255.

12. v. 107. According to the old commentators, her brother Corso forced Piccarda by violence to leave the convent, in order to make a marriage which he desired for her.

13. v. 112. Her experience was similar to that of Piccarda.

14. v. 117. She remained a nun at heart.

15. v. 118. Constance, daughter of the king of Sicily,

from the second wind<sup>16</sup> of Swabia conceived the third and the last power."

Thus she spoke to me, and then began singing "*Ave Maria*," and singing vanished, as through deep water some heavy thing. My sight, that followed her so far as was possible, after it lost her, turned to the mark of greater desire, and wholly reverted to Beatrice; but she so flashed upon my gaze that at first my sight endured it not: and this made me more slow in questioning.

Roger I. ; married, in 1186, to the Emperor, Henry VI., the son of Frederick Barbarossa, and father of Frederick II., who died in 1250, the last Emperor of his line.

16. v. 119. The significance of this metaphor is not clear. It, perhaps, refers to the stormy natures or lives of the Swabian emperors, so that "wind" stands for "blast" or "whirlwind."

## CANTO IV

*Doubts of Dante, respecting the justice of Heaven and the abode of the blessed, solved by Beatrice. — Question of Dante as to the possibility of reparation for broken vows.*

BETWEEN two viands, distant and attractive in equal measure, a free man would die of hunger, before he would bring one of them to his teeth.<sup>1</sup> Thus a lamb would stand between two ravens of fierce wolves, fearing both alike; thus would stand a dog between two does. Wherefore if, urged in equal measure by my doubts, I was silent, I do not blame myself; nor, since it was necessary, do I commend.

I was silent, but my desire was depicted on my face, and my questioning with that far more fervent than by distinct speech. Beatrice did what Daniel did,<sup>2</sup> when he lifted Nebuchad-

1. v. 3. This is the same sophism that became widely known, later in the fourteenth century, under the name of the Ass of Buridan. Buridan was one of the chief nominalists of the generation after Dante.

2. v. 13. As the dream of Nebuchadnezzar had been revealed to Daniel, as well as the interpretation of it by which he quenched the anger of the king, so, the unuttered questions

nezzar from anger, which had made him unjustly cruel, and she said: "I see well how one and another desire draws thee, so that thy care so binds itself that it breathes not forth.<sup>3</sup> Thou reasonest: 'If the good will endure, by what reckoning does the violence of others lessen for me the measure of desert?' Further, that the souls appear to return to the stars, in accordance with the opinion of Plato, gives thee occasion for doubt.<sup>4</sup> These are the questions that thrust equally upon thy wish; and therefore I will treat first of that which has the most venom.<sup>5</sup>

which perplexed Dante being visible to Beatrice, she proceeded to quench his thirst for their solution.

3. v. 18. Dante's equal eagerness to have each question solved hampered his power of expression of either.

4. v. 24. Plato, in his *Timaeus* (41, 42), says that the creator of the universe assigned each soul to a star, whence they were to be sown in the vessels of time. "He who lived well during his appointed time was to return to the star which was his habitation, and there he would have a blessed and suitable existence." Jowett's translation. — Dante's doubt has arisen from the words of Piccarda (Canto iii. 50, 51), which implied that her station was in the sphere of the Moon.

5. v. 27. This question has the most poison, because the belief that the souls returned to the stars would be contrary to the faith that the true end of the soul is the attainment of bliss in the vision of God in the Empyrean, and would tend to divert the soul from its effort to make itself worthy of



“Of the Seraphim he who is most in God, Moses, Samuel, and whichever John thou wilt take, I say even Mary, have not their seats in another heaven than those spirits who just now appeared to thee, nor have they more or fewer years for their existence; but all make the first circle beautiful, yet have sweet life diversely, through feeling more or less the eternal breath.<sup>6</sup> These showed themselves here, not because this sphere is allotted to them, but to afford sign of the celestial grade which is least exalted. It is needful to speak thus to your wit, since only through objects of sense does it apprehend that which it afterward makes worthy of the intellect. For this the Scripture condescends to your capacity, and attributes feet and hands to God, and means otherwise; and Holy Church represents to you Gabriel and Michael with human aspect, and the other who made Tobias whole again.<sup>7</sup> That which

this bliss. It also involved the theory, condemned as heresy by the council of Constantinople, in 540, that the soul was created separate from the body.

6. v. 36. The abode of all the blessed is the Empyrean, — the first circle, counting from above; but there are degrees in blessedness, each spirit enjoying according to its capacity; no one is conscious of any lack.

7. v. 48. The archangel Raphael, who restored sight to the old Tobias, so named in the Vulgate, but named Tobit in the English version of the book of Tobit.



Timæus argues of the souls is not like this which is seen here, since it seems that he thinks as he says.<sup>8</sup> He says that the soul returns to its own star, believing it to have been severed thence, when nature gave it for form.<sup>9</sup> But perhaps his opinion is of other guise than his words sound, and may be of a meaning not to be derided. If he means that the honor of their influence and the blame return to these wheels, perhaps his bow hits some truth. This principle, ill understood, formerly turned awry almost the whole world, so that it ran astray in naming Jove, Mercury, and Mars.<sup>10</sup>

“The other dubitation which disturbs thee has less venom, for its malice could not lead thee from me elsewhere. That our justice seems unjust in the eyes of mortals is argument of faith,<sup>11</sup> and not of heretical iniquity. But

8. v. 51. It seems that his words are the expression of his real opinion.

9. v. 54. The intellectual soul is united with the body as its substantial form. The form of anything is that by means of which it performs its functions (*operatur*). The soul is that by which the body lives, and hence is its form. *S. T. i. 76. 1.*

10. v. 63. Men were led astray so far as to ascribe the influence of the stars to the gods after whom they were named.

11. v. 69. Mortals would not trouble themselves concerning the justice of God, unless they had faith in it. These perplexities are then arguments or proofs of faith; as St.

because your intelligence can well penetrate to this truth, I will make thee content, as thou desirest. If it be violence when he who suffers contributes nothing to what forces him, these souls were not by reason of that excused; for will, unless it wills, is not quenched,<sup>12</sup> but does as nature does in fire, though violence a thousand times may wrest it;<sup>13</sup> because if it bend much or little,<sup>14</sup> it follows the force; and thus did these, when they had power to return to the holy place. If their will had been entire, such as held Lawrence<sup>15</sup> on the gridiron, and

Thomas Aquinas says, "The merit of faith consists in this, that man, out of obedience to God, assents to what he does not see." *S. T.* iii. 7. 3. But in this case, as Beatrice goes on to show, mere human intelligence is sufficient to see that the injustice is only apparent.

12. v. 76. Violence has no power over the will if the will be opposed to it.

13. v. 78. These souls who were drawn by violence from the cloister were not by that relieved from their vow, but the moment constraint was removed should have returned to their original course, as fire which cannot be kept by any restraint from mounting upward.

14. v. 79. If it give way to what Shakespeare calls "accessary yieldings." *Lucrece*, v. 1658.

15. v. 83. St. Lawrence, who suffered martyrdom A. D. 258. "His love of Christ was not to be overcome by the flame, and the fire which burned without was weaker than that which glowed within." *Breviarium Rom. Dis*  
10. Aug.

made Mucius <sup>16</sup> severe to his own hand, it would have urged them back, so soon as they were loosed, along the road on which they had been dragged ; but will so firm is too rare. And by these words, if thou hast gathered them up as thou shouldst, is the argument quashed which would have given thee annoy yet many times.

“ But now another pass runs traverse before thine eyes, such that by thyself thou wouldst not issue from it ere thou wert weary. I have put it in thy mind for certain, that a soul in bliss cannot lie, since it is always near to the Primal Truth ; and then thou mightst hear from Piccarda that Constance retained affection for the veil ; so that she seems in this to contradict me.<sup>17</sup> Many a time ere now, brother, has it happened that, in order to escape peril, that which it was not meet to do has been done against one’s liking ; even as Alcmaeon (who, thereto entreated by his father, slew his own mother), not to lose piety, pitiless became.<sup>18</sup> On

16. v. 84. “ Who shall say that it was without Divine inspiration . . . that Mucius burned his own hand, because he had missed the blow which he thought should deliver Rome.” *Convito*, iv. 5, 107-118.

17. v. 99. The difficulty is this : if Constance “ was never in her heart loosed from the veil ” (iii. 117) how is it that she did not return to the cloister ?

18. v. 105. Amphiaraus, the seer, having been betrayed to his death at the siege of Thebes by his wife Eriphyle,

this point, I wish thee to think that the force mingles itself with the will, and they so act that the offences cannot be excused. Will absolute does not consent to the wrong; but it consents in so far thereto, as it fears, if it draw back, to fall into greater trouble. Therefore when Piccarda says this, she means it of the absolute will; and I of the other:<sup>19</sup> so that we both speak truth together."

Such was the rippling of the holy stream which issued from the fount whence every truth flows forth; and such it set at rest one and the other desire.

"O beloved of the First Lover, O divine one," said I then, "whose speech overflows me and warms, so that it quickens me more and more, my affection is not so deep that it can suffice to render to you grace for grace,<sup>20</sup> but may He who sees and can, respond for this. I clearly see that our intellect is never satisfied unless the Truth illumine it, beyond which nothing true extends. In that it reposes, as a wild beast in his lair, so soon as it has reached it: and it can reach it; otherwise every desire would be in vain. Because of this, doubt

enjoined on his son Alcmæon to avenge him by slaying her. See *Purgatory*, xii. 49-51.

19. v. 114. The other, that is, the qualified will.

20. v. 122. Thanks equivalent to the favor.

springs up like a shoot, at the foot of the truth; and it is nature which urges us to the summit from height to height.<sup>21</sup> This invites me, this gives me assurance, Lady, with reverence to question you of another truth which is obscure to me. I wish to know if man can so make satisfaction to you<sup>22</sup> for defective vows with other goods, that in your scales they may not be light?" Beatrice looked at me with eyes so divine, full of the sparks of love, that my power, vanquished, turned its back, and I almost lost myself with eyes cast down.

21. v. 132. Because of this constant desire for truth, there springs up naturally in man, with the attainment of each new truth, a doubt or question which urges him in the pursuit of that further truth which may solve it.

22. v. 136. To you; that is, to the court of **Heaven**.

## CANTO V

*The sanctity of vows, and the seriousness with which they are to be made or changed. — Ascent to the Heaven of Mercury. — The shade of Justinian.*

“ IF I flame upon thee in the heat of love, beyond the measure that is seen on earth, so that I vanquish the valor of thine eyes, marvel not, for it proceeds from perfect vision, which, according as it apprehends, so does it move its foot to the apprehended good.<sup>1</sup> I see clearly how already in thy intellect is shining the eternal light,<sup>2</sup> which, only seen, always enkindles love; and if any other thing seduce your love, it is naught but some vestige of that light, ill-recognized, which therein shines through.<sup>3</sup>

1. v. 6. The heat of love which dazzles thine eyes proceeds from the vision of God which, in proportion as it illuminates the soul with knowledge of Him, quickens its love for Him.

2. v. 8. Dante's words in the last canto (vv. 124–126) have shown this.

3. v. 12. This corresponds with the doctrine concerning love set forth in the seventeenth and eighteenth cantos of *Purgatory*.

Thou wishest to know if for an unfulfilled vow so much can be paid with other service as may secure the soul from suit.”<sup>4</sup>

So Beatrice began this chant, and as one who breaks not off his speech, she thus continued her holy discourse: “The greatest gift which God in His bounty bestowed in creating, and the most conformed to His own goodness, and that which He prizes the most, was the freedom of the will, with which the creatures that have intelligence, they all and they alone, were and are endowed. Now, if thou argue from this, the high worth of the vow will appear to thee, if it be such that God consent when thou consentest;<sup>5</sup> for, in closing the compact between God and man, victim is made of this treasure, such as I say,<sup>6</sup> and made by its own act. What then can be rendered in compensation? If thou think to make good use of that which thou hast offered, thou wishest to do good work with ill-gotten gain.”<sup>7</sup>

4. v. 15. Brought by God for the fulfilment of the claim established by the original vow.

5. v. 27. If the vow be valid through its acceptance by God.

6. v. 29. This treasure of the freedom of the will, so precious as Beatrice has just declared it to be.

7. v. 33. The intent to put what had been vowed to another, though good, use, affords no excuse for the breaking of the vow.

“Thou art now assured as to the greater point;<sup>8</sup> but since Holy Church in this grants dispensation, which seems contrary to the truth that I have disclosed to thee, it behoves thee still to sit a little at table, because the tough food which thou hast taken requires still some aid for thy digestion. Open thy mind to that which I reveal to thee, and shut it therewithin; for to have heard without retaining does not make knowledge.

“Two things combine in the essence of this sacrifice; the one is that in respect to which it is made, the other is the covenant. This last is never cancelled if not kept; and concerning this was my preceding speech so precise. Therefore it was only imperative on the Hebrews to make offering, while the special thing offered might be changed, as thou shouldst know.<sup>9</sup> The other, which is known to thee as the matter,<sup>10</sup> may indeed be such that there is no fault if it be exchanged for some other matter. But let not any one shift the load

8. v. 34. That no other service can be substituted for a broken vow, for nothing can be offered comparable to the sacrifice of the free will.

9. v. 51. See *Leviticus* xxvii., in respect to commutation allowed. <sup>8</sup>

10. v. 52. That is, as the subject-matter of the vow, the thing offered.



upon his shoulder at his own will, without the turning both of the white and of the yellow key.<sup>11</sup> And let him deem every permutation foolish, if the thing laid down be not contained in that which is taken up, as four in six.<sup>12</sup> Therefore whatever thing weighs so much, through its own worth, that it can drag down every balance, cannot be made good with other spending.

“Let not mortals take a vow as a trifle: be faithful, and not awry in so doing, as Jephthah was in his first offering;<sup>13</sup> to whom it rather behoved to say: ‘I have done ill,’ than, by keeping his vow, to do worse.<sup>14</sup> And thou

11. v. 57. Without the turning of the keys of St. Peter, that is, without clerical dispensation; the key of gold signifying authority, that of silver, knowledge. See *Purgatory*, ix. 118-126.

12. v. 60. The matter substituted must exceed in worth that of the original vow, but not necessarily in a definite proportion. The injunction in *Leviticus* xxvii. is to add a fifth part of the money of the estimation.

13. v. 66. Be faithful in the keeping of the vow, but keep it not in any mistaken fashion, as Jephthah did; see *Judges* xi. 30-39. “In his *first* offering” is explained by the words of the Vulgate (verse 31), “quicumque *primus* fuerit egressus foribus domus meae . . . eum holocaustum offeram Domino.”

14. v. 68.

“For that which thou hast sworn to do amiss

Is but amiss when it is truly done;

And being not done, where doing tends to ill,

The truth is then most done not doing it.” — *King John*, iii. 1.

mayst find the great leader of the Greeks in like manner foolish;<sup>15</sup> wherefore Iphigenia wept for her fair face, and made weep for her both the simple and the wise, who heard tell of such like observance. Be ye, Christians, more grave in moving; be not like a feather to every wind, and think not that every water may wash you. Ye have the Old and the New Testament, and the Shepherd of the Church who guides you; let this suffice you for your salvation. If evil covetousness cry aught else to you, be ye men, and not silly sheep, so that the Jew among you may not laugh at you. Do not ye as the lamb, which leaves its mother's milk, and, simple and wanton, at its own pleasure combats with itself."

Thus Beatrice to me, even as I write; then all desireful turned again to that region where the world is most alive.<sup>16</sup> Her silence and her changed look imposed silence on my eager mind, which already had new questions in advance. And as an arrow that hits the mark before the bowstring is quiet, so we ran into the second realm.<sup>17</sup> Here I saw my lady so

15. v. 69. Thus foolish was Agamemnon in keeping the vow which resulted in the sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia.

16. v. 87. Looking upward, toward the Empyrean.

17. v. 93. The Heaven of Mercury, where blessed spirits who have been active in the pursuit of honor and fame show themselves. The shadow of the earth still reaches

joyous as she entered into the light of that heaven, that the planet itself became the brighter for it. And if the star was changed and smiled, what did I become, who even by my nature am transmutable in every wise!

As in a fishpond, which is still and clear, the fish draw to that which comes in such manner from without that they deem it their food, so I saw full more than a thousand splendors drawing toward us, and in each was heard: "Lo, one who shall increase our loves!"<sup>18</sup> And as each one came to us, the shade was seen full of joy by the bright effulgence that issued from it.

Think, Reader, if that which is here begun should not proceed, how thou wouldst have a grievous craving to know more; and by thyself thou wilt see what my desire was to hear from these of their conditions, soon as they became manifest to mine eyes.

"O well-born,"<sup>19</sup> to whom Grace concedes to see the thrones of the eternal triumph ere the warfare is abandoned,<sup>20</sup> with the light which

here, and the low grade in Heaven of the spirits who appear here is assigned to them because the love of earthly glory diverted their affections too much from the glory of Heaven.

18. v. 105. By giving us occasion to manifest our love.

19. v. 115. That is, born to good, to attain blessedness.

20. v. 117. Ere thy life on earth, as a member of the Church Militant, is ended.

spreads through the whole heaven we are enkindled, and therefore if thou desirest to enlighten thyself by means of us, sate thyself at thy pleasure." Thus was it said to me by one of those pious spirits; and by Beatrice: "Speak, speak securely, and trust even as to gods."<sup>21</sup> "I see clearly, how thou dost nest thyself in thine own light, and that thou drawest it through thine eyes, because they sparkle as thou smilest;<sup>22</sup> but I know not who thou art, nor why, O worthy soul, thou hast the grade of the sphere which is veiled to mortals by another's rays."<sup>23</sup> This I said, addressed to the light which first had spoken to me; whereon it became far more lucent than it had been. Even as the sun, which, when the heat has consumed the tempering of the dense vapors, conceals itself by excess of light, so, by reason of more joy, did the holy shape hide itself from me within its own radiance, and thus close enclosed, it answered me in the fashion which the following canto sings.

21. v. 123. "Even as all holy men are called gods."  
*S. T.* iii. 16. 1.

22. v. 125. This is the last occasion, till he reaches the Empyrean, on which the features of the blessed are visible to Dante. In the succeeding spheres they are completely hidden in the radiance within which the spirits are enclosed.

23. v. 129. Mercury is veiled by the Sun.

## CANTO VI

*Justinian tells of his own life. — The story of the Roman Eagle. — Spirits in the planet Mercury. — Romeo.*

“AFTER Constantine turned the Eagle counter to the course of the heavens which it had followed behind the ancient who took to wife Lavinia,<sup>1</sup> a hundred and a hundred years and more<sup>2</sup> the bird of God held itself on the verge of Europe, near to the mountains<sup>3</sup> from which it first came forth, and there it governed the world beneath the shadow of its sacred wings, from hand to hand, and thus changing, descended unto mine. Caesar I was,<sup>4</sup> and am Justinian,

1. v. 3. Constantine, transferring the seat of Empire from Rome to Byzantium, carried the Eagle from West to East, counter to the course which it took with Aeneas from Troy to Italy, where he was to become the father of the Roman people, and the founder of the Empire of whose power the bird of God was the symbol.

2. v. 4. From A. D. 324, when the transfer was begun, to 527, when Justinian became Emperor.

3. v. 6. Of the Troad, opposite Byzantium.

4. v. 10. On earth Emperor, but in Heaven earthly dignities exist no longer.

who, by will of the primal Love which I feel, drew out from among the laws the superfluous and the vain.<sup>5</sup> And before I was intent on this work, I believed one nature to be in Christ, not more,<sup>6</sup> and with such faith was I content; but the blessed Agapetus, who was the supreme pastor, directed me to the pure faith with his words. I believed him; and that which was in his faith I now see clearly, even as thou seest that every contradiction is both false and true.<sup>7</sup> Soon as with the Church I moved my feet, it pleased God, through grace, to inspire me with this high task, and I gave myself wholly to it. And I entrusted my arms to my Belisarius, with whom the right hand of Heaven was so conjoined that it was a sign that I should rest me.

5. v. 12. The allusion is to Justinian's codification of the Roman Law.

6. v. 14. The divine nature only; this was known as the Monophysite or Eutychian heresy. Agapetus was Pope for only ten months, in 535-536. He was sent to Constantinople by the Gothic King Theodahad, to endeavor to make peace for him with the Emperor. In this errand the Pope failed; but he induced Justinian to depose the Patriarch of Constantinople, on the ground of his holding the Monophysite doctrine, and thus confirmed the claim of the Roman Papacy over the Church of the East as well as over that of the West.

7. v. 26. Of the two terms of a contradictory proposition one must be true, the other false.

“Now here to the first question<sup>8</sup> my answer comes to the stop; but its condition constrains me to add a sequel to it, in order that thou mayst see with how much reason<sup>9</sup> he moves against the sacrosanct ensign, who appropriates it to himself,<sup>10</sup> and he too who opposes himself to it.<sup>11</sup> See how great virtue has made it worthy of reverence.” And he began from the hour when Pallas<sup>12</sup> died to give it a kingdom. “Thou knowest that it made its abode in Alba for three hundred years and more, till at the end when the three against the three<sup>13</sup> fought for it still. And thou knowest what it did, from the wrong of the Sabine women down to the woe of Lucretia, in seven kings, conquering the neighboring peoples round about. Thou knowest what it did when borne by the illustrious Romans

8. v. 28. The question contained in the words, “I know not who thou art” (v. 127). The condition attached to the answer was, that Justinian, having said that he was emperor, is constrained to speak of the nature and authority of the Empire, as symbolized by the eagle its standard.

9. v. 31. Ironical. The meaning is, “how wrongly.”

10. v. 32. The Ghibelline.

11. v. 33. The Guelf.

12. v. 36. Son of Evander, King of Latium, sent by his father to aid Aeneas. His death in battle against Turnus led to that of Turnus himself, and to the possession of the Latin kingdom by Aeneas.

13. v. 39. The Horatii and Curiatii.



against Brennus, against Pyrrhus, and against the other princes and confederates; whereby Torquatus, and Quinctius who was named from his neglected locks, the Decii and the Fabii acquired the fame which willingly I embalm. It struck to earth the pride of the Arabs,<sup>14</sup> who, following Hannibal, passed the Alpine rocks from which thou, Po, dost glide. Under it, in their youth, Scipio and Pompey triumphed, and to that hill beneath which thou wast born, it seemed bitter.<sup>15</sup> Afterward, near the time when all Heaven willed to bring the world to its own serene mood, Caesar, by the will of Rome, took it; and what it did from the Var even to the Rhine, the Isère beheld, and the Saône, and the Seine beheld, and every valley whence the Rhone is filled. That which it did after it came forth from Ravenna, and leaped the Rubicon, was of such flight that neither tongue nor pen could follow it. Toward Spain it wheeled its troop; then toward Durazzo, and smote Phar-

14. v. 49. In Dante's time the territory of Carthage was held by the Arabs, and, with characteristic disregard of the anachronism, he calls the Carthaginians of old by the name of the modern race, which happens to suit the rhyme.

15. v. 54. According to popular tradition, recorded by Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, i. 37, Fiesole, which lies on a hill overlooking Florence, had been the headquarters of Catiline's army, and was destroyed by the Romans after his defeat and death.



salia so that to the warm Nile the pain was felt. It saw again Antandros and the Simois, whence it had set forth, and there where Hector lies ;<sup>16</sup> and ill for Ptolemy then it shook itself. Thence it swooped flashing down on Juba ; then wheeled again unto your west, where it heard the Pompeian trumpet. Of what it did with its next standard-bearer,<sup>17</sup> Brutus with Cassius howls in Hell ; and it made Modena and Perugia woful. Because of it the sad Cleopatra is still weeping, who, fleeing before it, took from the asp sudden and black death. With him it ran far as the Red Sea shore ; with him it set the world in such peace that his temple was locked up on Janus.<sup>18</sup>

“ But what the ensign which makes me speak had done before, and after was to do, through

16. v. 68. It was from Antandros, on the coast of Troas, that Aeneas set sail with his followers for Italy. *Aeneid*, iii. 5. The Simois ran not far off.

17. v. 73. Augustus.

18. v. 81. The temple of Janus — of which the doors were closed only in time of peace, for in time of war the god was supposed to be absent with the armies — had been locked up but twice during the whole life of the Roman Republic. But under Augustus they were closed three times ; and in one of those periods when “ Heaven willed to bring the world to its own serene mood ” (v. 56) it has been supposed that Christ was born ; and then, “ no war, or battle’s sound was heard the world around.”

the mortal realm which is subject to it, becomes in appearance little and obscure, if it be looked on in the hand of the third Caesar<sup>19</sup> with clear eye and with pure affection; for the Living Justice which inspires me granted to it, in the hand of him of whom I speak, the glory of doing vengeance for Its own wrath.<sup>20</sup> Now marvel here at that which I unfold to thee: afterward with Titus it sped to do vengeance for the vengeance of the ancient sin.<sup>21</sup>

“And when the Lombard tooth bit the Holy Church, under its wings Charlemagne, conquering, succored her.

“Now canst thou judge of such as those whom I accused above, and of their misdeeds, which are the cause of all your ills. To the public ensign one opposes the yellow lilies,<sup>22</sup> and the other appropriates it to a party, so that it is hard to see which is most at fault. Let the Ghibellines practice, let them practice their art under another ensign, for this one he ever follows ill who parts justice and it. And let

19. v. 86. Tiberius.

20. v. 90. It was under the authority of Rome that Christ was crucified, whereby the sin of Adam was avenged.

21. v. 93. Vengeance was taken on the Jews for the vengeance which they had wrought for the sin of Adam, because, although the death of Christ was divinely ordained, their crime in it was none the less.

22. v. 100. The fleur-de-lys of France.

not this new Charles<sup>23</sup> strike it down with his Guelfs, but let him fear the talons, which have stripped the fell from a loftier lion. Many a time ere now the sons have wept for the sin of the father; and let him not believe that for his lilies God will change His arms.<sup>24</sup>

“This little star is adorned with good spirits who have been active in order that honor and fame may follow them. And when the desires thus deviating mount thitherward, the rays of the true love must needs mount upward less living.<sup>25</sup> But in the equal measure of our wages with our desert is part of our joy, because we see them neither less nor greater. Hereby the Living Justice makes our affection so sweet within us, that it can never be bent aside to any iniquity. Divers voices make sweet melodies; thus in our life divers seats render sweet harmony among these wheels.<sup>26</sup>

“And within the present pearl shines the

23. v. 106. Charles II., King of Naples, son of Charles of Anjou.

24. v. 111. That God will change the emblem ordained by Him as the armorial ensign of the Empire which was His instrument for the government of men on earth.

25. v. 117. When the desires are set on fame and worldly honors the love of things divine is less living in the heart.

26. v. 125. The different grades of the blessed manifest in the circling spheres.

light of Romeo, whose beautiful and great work was ill requited.<sup>27</sup> But the Provençals who wrought against him have not the laugh; and forsooth he goes an ill road who makes harm for himself<sup>28</sup> of another's good deed. Four daughters, and each a queen, had Raymond Berenger, and Romeo, a humble person and a pilgrim, did this<sup>29</sup> for him. And then crooked words moved him to demand a reckoning of this just man, who had rendered to him seven and five for ten. Thereon he departed, poor and old, and if the world but knew the heart he had, while begging his livelihood bit by bit, much as it lauds him it would laud him more."

27. v. 129. According to Giovanni Villani (vi. 90), one Romeo, a pilgrim to Rome (whence, perhaps, his appellation), came to the court of Raymond Berenger IV., Count of Provence (who died in 1245), and winning the count's favor, served him with such wisdom and fidelity that by his means his master's revenues were greatly increased, and his four daughters married to four kings, — Margaret, to Louis IX., St. Louis, of France; Eleanor, to Henry III. of England; Sanzia, to Richard, Earl of Cornwall (brother of Henry III.), elected King of the Romans; and Beatrice, to Charles of Anjou (brother of Louis IX.), King of Naples and Sicily. The Provençal nobles, jealous of Romeo, procured his dismissal, and he departed, with his mule and his pilgrim's staff and scrip, and was never seen more.

28. v. 132. By envy or calumny.

29. v. 134. The making each a queen.

## CANTO VII

*Discourse of Beatrice. — The Fall of Man. — The scheme of his Redemption.*

“*OSANNA sanctus Deus Sabaoth, superillustrans claritate tua felices ignes horum malachoth!*”<sup>1</sup> — thus, revolving to its own melody, that substance,<sup>2</sup> upon which a double light is twinned,<sup>3</sup> was seen by me to sing; and it and the others moved in their dance, and like swiftest sparks veiled themselves to me with sudden distance.<sup>4</sup> I was in doubt, and was saying: “Tell her, tell her,” within myself, “tell her,” I was saying,

1. v. 3. “Hosanna! Holy God of Sabaoth, illuminating from above with thy brightness the blessed fires of these realms.” The Hebrew word *malachoth* Dante found, interpreted as *regnorum*, in St. Jerome’s so-called *Prologus galeatus*, prefixed to the Vulgate.

2. v. 5. Substance, as a scholastic term, signifies a being subsisting by itself with a quiddity, or specific nature, of its own. “*Substantiæ nomen significat essentiam cui competit sic esse, id est per se esse; quod tamen esse non est ipsa ejus essentia.*” *S. T. i. 3. 5.*

3. v. 6. The light of his beatitude doubled by that of his joy in enlightening Dante; see Canto v. 131–137.

4. v. 9. Returning to the Empyrean, their abode.

“my Lady, who slakes my thirst with her sweet distillings;” but that reverence which is wholly mistress of me, only by BE and by ICE,<sup>5</sup> bowed me again like one who drowns. Short while did Beatrice suffer me thus, and she began, irradiating me with a smile such as would make a man in the fire happy: “According to my infallible advisement,<sup>6</sup> how a just vengeance could be justly avenged has set thee thinking; but I will quickly loose thy mind: and do thou listen, for my words will make thee the gift of a great doctrine.

“By not enduring a curb for his own good upon the power which wills, that man who was not born, damning himself, damned all his offspring; wherefore the human race lay sick down there<sup>7</sup> for many centuries, in great error, until it pleased the Word of God to descend where He, by the sole act of His eternal love, united with Himself in person the nature which had estranged itself from its Maker.

“Now turn thy sight to that which now I

5. v. 14. Only by the sound of her name.

6. v. 19. Beatrice sees Dante's thoughts reflected in the mind of God on which she is gazing, gaining therefrom unerring information of the perplexity to which the words of Justinian (Canto vi. 90-93), concerning the vengeance taken for the vengeance, had occasioned.

7. v. 29. On earth.

say: This nature, thus united with its Maker, was pure and good such as it was created; but by itself it had been banished from Paradise, because it turned aside from the way of truth and from its own life. The penalty therefore which the cross afforded, if it be measured by the nature assumed, — none ever so justly stung; and, so, none was ever of such great wrong, if we regard the Person who suffered, in whom this nature was contracted. Therefore from one act issued things diverse; for one death was pleasing to God and to the Jews: at it the earth trembled and the heaven was opened. Henceforth it ought no longer to seem difficult to thee, when it is said that a just vengeance was afterward avenged by a just court.<sup>8</sup>

“But I see now thy mind bound up, from thought to thought, within a knot, the loosing of which is awaited with great desire. Thou sayest: ‘I discern clearly that which I hear; but why God willed only this mode for our redemption is hidden from me.’ This decree, brother, lies buried to the eyes of every one whose wit is not matured in the flame of love. Yet, inasmuch as on this mark there is much

8. v. 51. The court of the Empire, with rightful jurisdiction over all mankind, “for the whole human race was punished in the flesh of Christ.” *De Monarchia*, ii. 13, 42.



gazing, and little is discerned, I will tell why such mode was the most worthy. The Divine Goodness, which from Itself spurns all envy,<sup>9</sup> burning in Itself so sparkles that It displays the eternal beauties. That which distils immediately<sup>10</sup> from It, thereafter has no end, for when It seals Its imprint can never be removed. That which rains down immediately from It is wholly free, because it is not subject to the power of the new things.<sup>11</sup> It<sup>12</sup> is the most conformed to It, and therefore pleases It the most; for the Holy Ardor which irradiates everything is most living in what is most like Itself. With all these things<sup>13</sup> the human creature is advantaged, and if one fail, he needs must fall from his nobility. Sin alone is that which disfranchises him, and makes him unlike the Supreme Good, so that he is little illumined by Its light; and to his dignity he never returns, unless,

9. v. 65. "Envy" signifies here the contrary of love.

10. v. 67. Without the intervention of a second cause.

11. v. 72. That is, not subject to the power of the heavens moved by the angelic Intelligences, which are new things in comparison with that First Cause by which they themselves were created.

12. v. 73. That which proceeds immediately from the Divine Goodness.

13. v. 76. That is, with immediate creation, with immortality, with free will, with likeness to God, and the love of God for it. Compare Canto v. 19-24.



where fault empties, he fill up with just penalties against evil delight. Your nature, when it sinned totally in its seed,<sup>14</sup> was removed from these dignities, even as from Paradise; nor could it recover them, if thou considerest full subtly, by any way, without passing by one of these fords: — either that God, solely by His courtesy, should have remitted; or that man by himself should have made satisfaction for his folly.<sup>15</sup> Fix now thine eye within the abyss of the eternal counsel, as closely fastened on my words as thou art able. Man within his own limits could never make satisfaction, through not being able to descend in humility, by subsequent obedience, so far as in his disobedience he had intended to ascend; and this is the reason why man was shut off from power to make satisfaction by himself. Therefore it was needful for God with His own ways<sup>16</sup> to restore man to his perfect life, — I mean with one way, or else with both. But because the deed of the

14. v. 86. Its seed was Adam, and all human nature sinned in his fall.

15. v. 93. "I applied my heart . . . to know the wickedness of folly." *Ecclesiastes* vii. 25.

16. v. 103. "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth." *Psalms* xxv. 10. Truth is to be understood here as justice. "The justice of God which establishes the order in things conformed to rule of his wisdom, which is his law, is properly named truth." *S. T.* i. 21. 2.

doer is so much the more prized, the more it displays of the goodness of the heart whence it issues, the Divine Goodness which sets its impress on the world was content to proceed by all Its ways<sup>17</sup> to lift you up again ; nor between the last night and the first day has there been or will there be so exalted and so magnificent a procedure either by the one way or by the other. For God was more bounteous<sup>18</sup> in giving Himself to make man sufficient to uplift himself, than if He only of Himself had remitted ; and all the other modes were scanty in respect to justice, if the Son of God had not humbled Himself to become incarnate.

“ Now to fulfil for thee every desire, I return to a certain place to make it clear, in order that there thou mayst see as I do. Thou sayest : ‘ I see the water, I see the fire, the air, and the earth, and all their mixtures come to corruption, and endure short while, and yet these things were created things ; ’ so that, if what I have said<sup>19</sup> has been true, they ought to be secure against corruption. The Angels, brother, and the pure country in which thou art, may be called created, just as they are, in their

17. v. 110. Its paths of mercy and of justice.

18. v. 115. Showed greater mercy.

19. v. 128. In regard to that which distils immediately from God. See v. 67.

entire being; but the elements which thou hast named, and those things which are made of them, are informed by a created virtue.<sup>20</sup> The matter of which they consist was created; the informing virtue in these stars which go round about them was created. The ray and the motion of the holy lights draw out from its potentiate elements<sup>21</sup> the soul of every brute and of the plants; but the Supreme Benignity inspires your life without intermediary, and enamors it of Itself so that ever after it desires It. And hence<sup>22</sup> thou further canst infer your resurrection, if thou reflect how the human flesh was made when the first parents were both made."

20. v. 135. The elements are informed, that is, receive their specific being, not immediately from God, but mediately through the angelic Intelligences from whom the spheres derive the virtue which informs them.

21. v. 140. Literally, "from potentiate compound" (*compleSSION potenziata*), that is, from the various matter endowed with the potentiality of becoming informed by the vegetative and the sensitive soul. In the *Convito* (iv. 25, 36) Dante explains *compleSSIONe* as *gli elementi legati*, "the united elements."

22. v. 145. From the principle that what proceeds immediately from God is immortal, the resurrection of the body is to be inferred, God having Himself created the flesh as well as the spirit of man.

## CANTO VIII

*Ascent to the Heaven of Venus. — Spirits of Lovers.  
— Source of the order and the varieties in mortal things.*

THE world in its peril<sup>1</sup> was wont to believe that the beautiful Cyprian<sup>2</sup> revolving in the third epicycle<sup>3</sup> rayed out mad love; wherefore the ancient people in their ancient error not only unto her did honor with sacrifice and with votive cry, but they honored Dione<sup>4</sup> also and Cupid, the one as her mother, the other as her son, and they said that he had sat in Dido's lap;<sup>5</sup> and from her, from whom I take my beginning, they took the name of the star which

1. v. 1. In heathen times.

2. v. 2. Venus, so called from her birth in Cyprus.

3. v. 3. In the astronomy of the ancients the term epicycle designated a circle having its centre on the circumference of another circle. In order to account for the apparent motions of the planets, Ptolemy, whose astronomical system prevailed till overthrown by the discoveries of Copernicus, adopted the hypothesis that each planet moved in an epicycle, upon the great circle of the heavens, which revolved around the earth.

4. v. 7. Dione, daughter of Oceanus and Thetis, mother of Venus.

5. v. 9. Under the semblance of Ascanius, as Virgil tells in the first book of the Aeneid.

the sun woos, now behind her now before.<sup>6</sup> I was not aware of the ascent to it; but of being in it, my Lady gave me full assurance, whom I saw become more beautiful.

And as a spark is seen within a flame, and as within a voice a voice is distinguished when one is steady and the other goes and returns, I saw within that light other lamps moving in a circle, speeding more or less, according to the measure, I believe, of their eternal vision. From a cold cloud winds, whether visible or not,<sup>7</sup> never descended so swiftly, that they would not seem impeded and slow to him who had seen these divine lights coming to us, leaving the circling begun first in the exalted Seraphim.<sup>8</sup> And within those who appeared most in front was sounding *Hosanna*, in such wise that never since have I been without desire of hearing it again. Then one drew nearer to us, and alone began: "We all are ready at thy pleasure, that thou mayst have joy of us. With one circle,

6. v. 12. According as Venus is morning or evening star. Literally, "now at her nape, now at her brow."

7. v. 23. Whether visible as lightning, according to Aristotle's doctrine "that lightning was simply wind rendered visible by ignition" (Moore, *Studies*, i. 132); or invisible blasts.

8. v. 27. The circling of these spirits corresponds with the circular dance of the Seraphim, the most exalted of the Orders of the Angels, in the Empyrean.

with one circling, and with one thirst,<sup>9</sup> we revolve with the celestial Princes,<sup>10</sup> to whom thou in the world once didst say : ‘ *Ye whose intelligence moves the third heaven ;* ’<sup>11</sup> and we are so full of love that, in order to please thee, a little quiet will not be less sweet to us.”

After my eyes had offered themselves reverently to my Lady, and she had made them of herself contented and assured, they turned again to the light which had promised so much ; and : “ Say who ye are,” was my utterance, imprinted with great affection. Ah ! how much greater in quantity and quality<sup>12</sup> did I see it become, through the new gladness which was added to its gladnesses when I spoke ! Thus become, it said to me :<sup>13</sup> “ The world held me below

9. v. 35. One circle in space, one circling in eternity, one thirst for the vision of God.

10. v. 34. The third in ascending order of the hierarchy of the Angels, the Intelligences or motors of the heaven of Venus.

11. v. 37. This is the first verse of the first Canzone of the *Convito*.

12. v. 46. That is, in size and brightness.

13. v. 49. It is Charles Martel, eldest son of Charles II. of Naples, who speaks. He was born probably in 1271 ; he married in 1291 Clemence the daughter of the Emperor Rudolph I. ; in the spring of 129 $\frac{1}{2}$  he was at Florence for more than twenty days, and at this time he may have become acquainted with Dante. Great honor was done him by the Florentines, and he showed much love to them, so

but short while ; and had it been longer much evil had not been which will befall.<sup>14</sup> My joy, which rays around me, holds me concealed from thee, and hides me like a creature swathed in its own silk. Much didst thou love me, and hadst good reason why ; for had I stayed below I had shown thee of my love more than the leaves. That left bank which is bathed by the Rhone, after it has mingled with the Sorgue, awaited me in due time for its lord ;<sup>15</sup> as well as that horn of Ausonia<sup>16</sup> which has for suburbs Bari, and Gaeta, and Catona,<sup>17</sup> from where the Tronto

that he won favor from everybody, says Villani. He died in 1295.

14. v. 51. Literally, "had it been more, much of ill shall be which should not be." These words probably refer to the fact that, on the death of Charles II. in 1309, the kingdom of Naples, to which Charles Martel would have succeeded, was secured, to the exclusion of his son, Carlo Roberto, by his brother Robert, who brought many ills upon the country. See verses 76-84.

15. v. 60. Charles of Anjou, grandfather of Charles Martel, had received that part of Provence which lies east of the Rhone as dowry of his wife Beatrice, the youngest daughter of Raymond Berenger. Cf. vi. 133-136.

16. v. 61. A name for Italy of uncertain derivation, used in classical times only by the poets.

17. v. 62. Bari on the Adriatic, Gaeta on the Mediterranean, and Catona at the toe of Italy, together with the two rivers named, give roughly the boundaries of the Kingdom of Naples.



and the Verde disgorge into the sea. Already was shining on my brow the crown of that land which the Danube waters after it abandons its German banks; <sup>18</sup> and the fair Trinacria <sup>19</sup> (which between Pachynus and Pelorus, on the gulf which receives greatest annoy from Eurus, is darkened, not by Typhoeus but by nascent sulphur) would be still awaiting its kings sprung through me from Charles and Rudolph, <sup>20</sup> if evil rule, which always embitters the subject people, had not moved Palermo to shout: 'Die! Die!' <sup>21</sup> And if my brother had forenoted

18. v. 66. The mother of Charles Martel was sister of Ladislaus IV., King of Hungary. He died without offspring, and Charles II. claimed the kingdom by right of his wife.

19. v. 67. Sicily; the gulf darkened by sulphurous fumes is the Bay of Calabria, which lying between Cape Pachynus, the extreme southeastern point of the island, and Cape Pelorus, the extreme northeastern, is exposed to the full violence of Eurus or the East wind. Clouds of smoke from Aetna sometimes darken it. The eruptions of Aetna were ascribed by Ovid (*Metam.*, v. 346-353) to the struggles of Typhoeus, one of the Giants who made war upon the Gods, and who, being overthrown by Zeus with a thunderbolt, was buried under Mount Aetna. Ovid's verses suggested this description.

20. v. 72. From his father, Charles II., or his grandfather, Charles of Anjou, and from the Emperor Rudolph of Hapsburg, the father of his wife.

21. v. 75. By the insurrection which began at Palermo in 1282, — the famous Sicilian Vespers, — the French were



this,<sup>22</sup> he would ere now be flying from the greedy poverty of Catalonia, in order that it might not do him harm: for truly it is needful for him or for some other to provide, so that on his laden bark more load be not put. His own nature, which descended niggardly from a liberal one, would have need of such a soldiery as should not care for putting into a chest.”<sup>23</sup>

“Because I believe that the deep joy which thy speech, my lord, infuses in me, is seen by thee there where every good has end and has beginning,<sup>24</sup> even as I see it, it is the more grateful to me; and this also I hold dear, that

driven from the island, and the rule over it of Charles of Anjou was brought to an end. The sovereignty, thus vacant, was conferred by the people on Peter III. of Aragon, as being the husband of the daughter of Manfred, the illegitimate son of the Emperor Frederick II.

22. v. 76. “Had my brother, before coming to the throne, noted how evil rule sets the hearts of the people against their rulers, he would already be getting rid of the greedy crowd of his impoverished followers.” This brother was Robert, the third son of Charles II. He had been kept as a hostage in Catalonia from 1288 to 1295, and when he became King of Naples in 1309 he introduced into his service many Catalonian officials. The words of Charles Martel are prophetic of the evils resulting from the avarice of King Robert and the greed of his courtiers.

23. v. 84. Officials who would not, by oppression of the subjects, seek to fill their own coffers.

24. v. 87. Is seen in the mind of God.

thou discernest it, gazing upon God.<sup>25</sup> Thou hast made me glad ; and so now do thou make clear to me (since in speaking thou hast moved me to doubt) how from sweet seed can issue bitterness." This I to him ; and he to me : " If I can make one truth plain to thee, thou wilt hold thy face toward that which thou askest, as thou dost now hold thy back. The Good which revolves and contents all the realm that thou art ascending, makes its foresight to be a power in these great bodies.<sup>26</sup> And not only are the natures foreseen in the Mind which by itself is perfect, but they together with their well-being.<sup>27</sup> Wherefore whatsoever this bow shoots falls disposed to its foreseen end, even as a thing directed to its aim. Were this not so, the heaven through which thou art journeying would produce its effects in such wise that they would not be works of art but ruins ; and that cannot be, if the Intelligences which move these stars are not defective, and defective the Prime

25. v. 90. It is also dear to me, that thou discernest that my joy is the greater because thou knowest it.

26. v. 99. God causes his foresight, or providence, to become a power in the spheres of Heaven, by which their respective influences, acting upon the objects or natures subject to them, operate to produce the foreordained effects.

27. v. 103. Not only are all natures — that is, all created things — foreseen, but also the order of nature by which all things are disposed to their respective ends.

Intelligence in that it did not make them perfect.<sup>28</sup> Dost thou wish that this truth be made still clearer to thee?" And I: "No, truly; because I see it to be impossible that Nature should weary in that which is needful."<sup>29</sup> Whereupon he again: "Now, say, would it be worse for man on earth if he were not a citizen?"<sup>30</sup> "Yes," answered I, "and here I ask not the reason."<sup>31</sup> "And can he be so, unless he live there below diversely for diverse duties?"<sup>32</sup> No; if your master<sup>33</sup> writes well of this." Thus he came deducing far as here; then he concluded: "Therefore the roots of your works must needs be diverse;<sup>34</sup> on which account one is born Solon, and another Xerxes,

28. v. 111. Defect in the subordinate Intelligences would imply defect in God, which is impossible.

29. v. 114. It is impossible that the order of nature should fail, that order being the design of God in creation.

30. v. 116. That is, united with other men in society.

31. v. 117. For the fact is evident that man is by nature a social animal, and cannot attain his true end except as a member of a community.

32. v. 119. Society cannot exist without diversity in the functions of its members.

33. v. 120. Aristotle, "the master of human reason." The whole of this discourse is derived from various passages in the Ethics and Politics of Aristotle.

34. v. 123. Human dispositions, the roots of human works, must be diverse in order that those works may be different.

another Melchisedech, and another he who, flying through the air, lost his son.<sup>35</sup> The circular nature, which is the seal of the mortal wax, performs its art well, but does not distinguish one inn from another.<sup>36</sup> Hence it happens that Esau differs in seed from Jacob, and Quirinus comes from so mean a father that he is ascribed to Mars. A begotten nature would always make its course like its begetters, if the divine foresight did not overcome.

“Now that which was behind thee is before thee, but that thou mayst know that I have joy in thee, I will that thou cloak thyself with a corollary.<sup>37</sup> Ever does a nature, if it find fortune discordant with itself, like every other seed out of its region, come to ill result. And if the world there below would fix attention on the foundation which Nature lays, following that, it would have its people good.<sup>38</sup> But ye

35. v. 126. Daedalus and Icarus.

36. v. 129. The circular nature, that is, the world of the spheres, pours down in its revolutions its various influences without discrimination of the individuals upon whom they fall; hence sons differ in their dispositions from their fathers.

37. v. 138. This additional statement completes the instruction, as a cloak completes the clothing of a body.

38. v. 144. If men were but brought up and employed in accordance with their natural dispositions, the world would be the better off.

wrest to religion one who shall have been born to gird on the sword, and ye make a king of one who is for preaching; so that your track is outside of the road.”<sup>39</sup>

39. v. 148. The path you follow is not the way of nature. The condensed argument of the reply of Charles Martel to Dante's question is made the more difficult to follow, because of the various meanings in which the word nature is employed. First, in v. 100 natures signify the products of Nature in its generic sense; in v. 114 Nature stands for the personified order of the created world; in v. 127 “the circular nature” is equivalent to the system of the spheres; in vv. 133 and 139 nature is used for the individual creature, though in the latter instance it is held by many commentators to signify Nature with the same meaning which it has in v. 142, where the word is employed in its generic and personified sense.

## CANTO IX

*The Heaven of Venus. — Conversation of Dante with Cunizza da Romano. — With Folco of Marseilles. — Rahab. — Avarice of the Papal Court.*

AFTER thy Charles, O beautiful Clemence,<sup>1</sup> had enlightened me, he told me of the frauds which his seed must experience;<sup>2</sup> but he said: "Keep silence, and let the years revolve;" so that I can say nothing, except that just lamentation shall follow on your wrongs.<sup>3</sup>

And now the life of that holy light had turned again unto the Sun which fills it, as that Good which suffices for every thing. Ah, souls deceived, and creatures impious, who from such Good turn away your hearts, directing your foreheads unto vanity!

And lo! another of those splendors made towards me, and by brightening outwardly was signifying its will to please me. The eyes of

1. v. 1. The widow of Charles Martel.

2. v. 2. Frauds by which his son Caroberto was deprived of his rights of succession to the throne of Naples.

3. v. 8. Those who have done the wrong shall justly lament therefor. This seems to be a mere general affirmation, for no special facts are known to justify it in this case.

Beatrice, which were fixed upon me, as before,<sup>4</sup> made me assured of dear assent to my desire. "Pray, blessed spirit," I said, "afford speedy satisfaction to my wish, and give me proof that what I think I can reflect on thee."<sup>5</sup> Whereon the light which was still new to me, from out its depth, wherein before<sup>6</sup> it was singing, proceeded, as one whom doing good delights:

"In that part<sup>7</sup> of the wicked Italian land which lies between Rialto and the founts of the Brenta and the Piave, rises a hill,<sup>8</sup> and mounts not very high, wherefrom a torch descended which made a great assault upon that district. From one root both I and it were born; I was called Cunizza; and I am refulgent here because the light of this star overcame me. But gladly do I grant myself indulgence for the occasion of my lot, and it does not trouble me;<sup>9</sup> which per-

4. v. 17. See Canto viii. 42.

5. v. 21. That thou, gazing on the mind of God, seest therein my thoughts reflected from it.

6. v. 23. See Canto viii. 28-30.

7. v. 25. The March of Treviso, lying between Venice (Rialto) and the Alps.

8. v. 28. The hill on which stood the little stronghold of Romano, the birthplace of the tyrant Azzolino, or Ezze-lino (1194-1259), whom Dante had seen in Hell (Canto xii. 109) punished for his horrible misdeeds in the river of boiling blood. Cunizza was his sister.

9. v. 35. The sin which has limited the capacity of



haps would seem a hard saying to your vulgar. Of this resplendent and precious jewel of our kingdom,<sup>10</sup> which is nearest to me, great fame has remained, and ere it die away this hundredth year shall yet come round five times. See if man ought to make himself excellent, so that the first life may leave another!<sup>11</sup> And this the present crowd, which the Tagliamento and the Adige shut in,<sup>12</sup> considers not; nor yet, though it be scourged, does it repent. But it will soon come to pass that because her people are stubborn against duty,<sup>13</sup> Padua at the marsh will change the water which bathes Vicenza. And where the Sile and the Cagnano unite, one lords it, and goes with his head high, for catch-

bliss, and has determined the low grade of Cunizza in Paradise, is pardoned to herself and forgotten, and she, like Piccarda, wishes only for that blessedness which she has.

10. v. 38. Folco, or Folquet, of Marseilles, once a dissolute and famous troubadour, then bishop of Toulouse. He died in 1231.

11. v. 42. Another, that is, the enduring life of good fame.

12. v. 44. The people of the region where Cunizza lived.

13. v. 48. During the years in which Dante was writing his poem the Paduan Guelfs, resisting the Emperor, to whom they owed duty, were defeated more than once, near Vicenza, by Can Grande, the Imperial Vicar, staining with their blood the waters of the marsh which the Bacchiglione forms near Verona.



ing whom the web is already made.<sup>14</sup> Feltro will yet weep the crime of its impious shepherd, which will be so shameful, that, for a like, none ever entered Malta.<sup>15</sup> Too large would be the vat which should receive the Ferrarese blood, and weary he who should weigh it ounce by ounce, which this courteous priest will give to show himself of his party;<sup>16</sup> and such gifts will be conformed to the living of the country. Above are mirrors, ye call them Thrones,<sup>17</sup> wherefrom God in judgment shines on us, so

14. v. 51. The Sile and the Cagnano unite at Treviso, whose lord, Riccardo da Camino, was assassinated in 1312. Riccardo was the son of "the good Gherardo," mentioned in *Purgatory*, xvi. 121-138; and by some early authorities he is said to have married Giovanna, the daughter of Nino de' Visconti, of whom her father speaks, *Purgatory*, viii. 70-72.

15. v. 54. An act of treachery in 1314 on the part of Alessandro Novello, the Bishop and Lord of Feltre, in delivering up certain Ghibelline refugees from Ferrara, whence they had fled after failing in a conspiracy. Some of them were beheaded and others hanged. This breach of faith was so vile that in the prison called Malta no such crime as his was ever punished. There is great difference among the early commentators as to the locality of Malta.

16. v. 59. The designation of "The Party" was appropriated by the Guelfs.

17. v. 61. The Thrones were the third order of the Angelic Hierarchy, and according to St. Gregory (*Homil.*, 34), that through which God executes his judgments.

that these words seem good to us.”<sup>18</sup> Here she was silent, and had to me the semblance of being turned elsewhither by the wheel in which she set herself as she was before.<sup>19</sup>

The other joy, which was already known to me as an illustrious thing,<sup>20</sup> became to my sight like a fine ruby whereon the sun should strike. Through joy effulgence is gained there on high, even as a smile here; but below<sup>21</sup> the shade darkens outwardly, as the mind is sad.

“God sees everything, and thy vision, blessed spirit, is in Him,” said I, “so that no wish can steal itself away from thee. Thy voice, then, which forever charms the heavens, together with the song of those devout fires which make a cowl for themselves with their six wings,<sup>22</sup> why does it not satisfy my desires? Surely I should not wait for thy request if I in-theed myself, as thou thyself in-meest.”<sup>23</sup> “The greatest

18. v. 63. Because we see reflected from the Thrones the judgment of God about to fall on the guilty.

19. v. 66. See Canto viii. 19-21, and 34-35.

20. v. 68. By the words of Cunizza, verses 37-40.

21. v. 71. In Hell.

22. v. 78. The Seraphim, who with their wings cover themselves. See *Isaiab* vi. 2.

23. v. 81. If I saw thee inwardly as thou seest me. Dante invents the words he uses here, and they are no less unfamiliar in Italian than in English.

valley in which the water spreads,"<sup>24</sup> began then his words, "except of that sea which garlands the earth, extends between its discordant shores so far counter to the sun, that it makes a meridian where first it is wont to make the horizon."<sup>25</sup> I was a dweller on the shore of that valley, between the Ebro and the Macra,<sup>26</sup> which, with short course, divides the Genoese from the Tuscan. With almost the same sunset and the same sunrise sit Buggea and the city whence I was, which once made its harbor warm with its own blood.<sup>27</sup> That people to whom my name was known called me Folco, and this heaven is imprinted by me, as I was by it. For the daughter of Belus,<sup>28</sup> wronging both Sichaeus and Creüsa, burned not more than I, so long

24. v. 82. The Mediterranean.

25. v. 87. In the rude system of geography current in Dante's day the Mediterranean was held to extend from west to east, "counter to the sun," from the Pillars of Hercules to Jerusalem, over ninety degrees of longitude. Hence its western end, which formed the horizon at sunrise, would be under the zenith at noon.

26. v. 89. Between the Ebro in Spain and the Macra in Italy lies Marseilles, under almost the same meridian as Buggea (now Bougie), on the African coast, which was for a time during the Middle Ages an important port.

27. v. 93. When the fleet of Caesar defeated that of Pompey with its contingent of vessels and soldiers of Marseilles, B. C. 49.

28. v. 97. Dido, who by her passion for Aeneas

as it befitted my locks ;<sup>29</sup> nor she of Rhodope who was deluded by Demophoön ;<sup>30</sup> nor Alcides when he had enclosed Iole in his heart.<sup>31</sup> Yet here we repent not, but smile ; not for the fault, which does not return to the memory, but for the Power which ordained and foresaw. Here we gaze on the art which adorns so great a work,<sup>32</sup> and we discern the good whereby the world below turns to that above.<sup>33</sup>

wronged alike her dead husband Sichaeus, and Creüsa the dead wife of Aeneas.

29. v. 99. So long as youth lasted.

30. v. 100. Phyllis, daughter of the king of Thrace, who hanged herself, believing herself to have been deserted by Demophoön, the son of Theseus. Rhodope was the name of the chain of mountains between Thrace and Macedonia.

31. v. 102. Iole was the daughter of a king of Thessaly, and the love of Hercules for her so excited the jealousy of his wife Dejanaira that she brought about his death.

32. v. 107. Which makes the created universe beautiful.

33. v. 108. The doctrine of this canto, which, as Cunizza says, may "appear difficult to the common herd" (v. 36), is expressed, although somewhat obscurely, in verses 103-108. The mere sensual passion of love, such as that which possessed Cunizza and Folco, is in itself a fault ; but, under the providence of God exerted through the good influences of the Heavens, it may be transmuted into that pure love which fills the spirits who manifest themselves in the heaven of Venus. The fire of the earthly passion is the type of the ardent flame of the spiritual. The spirits, after due repentance, having purged away their fault in Purgatory, have forgotten it as fault, and smile at recognizing how the

“ But in order that thou mayst bear away all fulfilled thy wishes which have been born in this sphere, I must needs proceed still further. Thou wouldst know who is in this light, which beside me here so sparkles, as a sunbeam on clear water. Now know that therewithin Rahab<sup>34</sup> is at rest, and being joined with our order it is sealed by her in the supreme degree.<sup>35</sup> By this heaven, in which the shadow that your world makes comes to a point,<sup>36</sup> she was taken up before any other soul of the triumph of Christ. It was well befitting to leave her in

Divine power ordained it to be, as it were, the indication and measure of their capacity of heavenly love ; and they gaze upon the art which makes the creation beautiful, discerning the working of the good influences by which the earth, the lower world, is brought into harmony with the world on high, and that which was imperfect and faulty upon earth is turned to good.

34. v. 116. “ By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not.” *Hebrews* xi. 31. See *Joshua* ii. 1-21 ; vi. 17 ; *James* ii. 25.

35. v. 117. Our ranks are brightened by her splendor more than by any other.

36. v. 118. The conical shadow of the earth ended, according to Ptolemy, at the heaven of Venus. The reference to it has an allegorical meaning, the moral shadow of the earth being shown in the feebleness of will, the worldly ambition, and the inordinate love, which have allotted the souls who appear in the three shadowed spheres to the lowest grades in Paradise.

some heaven, as a palm of the high victory which was acquired with one palm and the other,<sup>37</sup> because she favored the first glory of Joshua in the Holy Land,<sup>38</sup> which little touches the memory of the Pope.<sup>39</sup>

“Thy city, which was planted by him who first turned his back on his Maker, and whose envy has been so bewept,<sup>40</sup> produces and scatters the accursed flower<sup>41</sup> which has caused the sheep and the lambs to stray, because it has made a wolf of the shepherd. For this the Gospel and the great Doctors are deserted, and there is study only of the Decretals,<sup>42</sup> as is

37. v. 122. By the hands nailed to the cross.

38. v. 125. The first glory of Joshua was the taking and destruction of Jericho, to which Rahab lent assistance by hiding the messengers whom he had sent to spy out the city. See *Joshua* ii. vi. Joshua was often held by the mediaeval expositors of Scripture to be a type of the Saviour, and Rahab a type of the Church saved by the blood of Christ, of which the scarlet thread which she bound in the window was typical.

39. v. 126. The Pope, Boniface VIII., gave little thought to the recovery of the Holy Land. Cf. *Hell*, xxvii. 85-87.

40. v. 129. “Through envy of the devil came death into the world.” *Wisdom of Solomon* ii. 24.

41. v. 130. The lily on the florin.

42. v. 134. The books of the Canon Law, by means of the study of which wealth may be acquired. Their margins are covered with notes, and soiled by continual use.

apparent by their margins. On this the Pope and the Cardinals are intent ; their thoughts go not to Nazareth, there where Gabriel spread his wings. But the Vatican, and the other chosen parts of Rome, which have been the burial place for the soldiery that followed Peter, shall soon be free from this adultery.”<sup>43</sup>

43. v. 142. By the removal in 1305 of the Papal Court to Avignon. Possibly, however, this prophecy may refer to the coming of that unnamed leader who was to be the liberator of Italy.



## CANTO X

*Ascent to the Sun. — Spirits of the wise, and the learned in theology. — St. Thomas Aquinas. — He names to Dante those who surround him.*

LOOKING upon His Son with the Love which the one and the other eternally breathe forth, the primal and ineffable Power made everything which revolves through the mind or through space with such order that he who contemplates it cannot be without taste of Him.<sup>1</sup> Lift then thy sight, Reader, with me to the lofty wheels, straight to that region where the one motion strikes on the other ;<sup>2</sup> and there

1. v. 6. All things, as well the spiritual and invisible objects of the intelligence as the corporeal and visible objects of sense, were made by God the Father, operating through the Son, with the love of the Holy Spirit, and made in such order that he who contemplates the creation beholds the partial image of the Creator.

2. v. 9. At the equinox, the season of Dante's journey, the sun in Aries is at the intersection of the ecliptic and the equator of the celestial sphere, and his apparent movement, in his annual revolution in the zodiac, cuts his apparent diurnal motion, which is parallel to the equator.



begin to gaze with delight on the art of that Master who within Himself so loves it that His eye never departs from it. See how from that point the oblique circle which bears the planets<sup>3</sup> branches off, to satisfy the world which calls on them ;<sup>4</sup> and if their road were not bent, much virtue in the heavens would be in vain, and well-nigh every potency dead here below ;<sup>5</sup> and if its departure were more or less distant from the straight line, much of the order of the world, both below and above, would be defective. Now remain, Reader, upon thy bench,<sup>6</sup> pursuing in thought that which is foretasted if thou wouldst be glad far sooner than weary. I have set before thee ; henceforth feed thou thyself, for that theme whereof I have been made the scribe wrests all my care unto itself.

The greatest minister of nature, which imprints the world with the worth of the heavens, and with his light measures the time for us, conjoined with that region which is mentioned above, was circling through the spirals in which from day to day he earlier presents him-

3. v. 14. The zodiac, which branches off from the equator at the equinoctial point.

4. v. 15. Which invokes their influence.

5. v. 18. Because on the obliquity of their path depends the variety of their influence.

6. v. 22. As a scholar.

self.<sup>7</sup> And I was with him ; but of the ascent I was not aware, otherwise than is a man, before his first thought, aware of its coming. It is Beatrice who thus conducts from good to better, so instantaneously that her act does not extend through time.

How lucent in itself must that have been which was apparent not by color but by light within the sun where I had entered ! Though I should call on genius, art, and use, I could not tell it so that it could ever be imagined ; but one may believe it, and let him long to see it. And if our fancies are low for such loftiness, it is no marvel, for beyond the sun there was never eye could go. Such<sup>8</sup> was here the fourth family of the exalted Father, who always satisfies it, showing how He breathes forth, and how He begets.<sup>9</sup> And Beatrice began : “ Give

7. v. 33. In that region which has been mentioned above, where the equator and the zodiac intersect, the sun was pursuing his spiral course, according to the Ptolemaic system, in which, after the vernal equinox, he rises every day a little earlier and a little farther north. So Donne : —

“ Where the Sun rose to-day  
He comes no more, but with a cozening line,  
Steals by that point, and so is serpentine.”

*An Anatomie of the World.*

8. v. 49. So lucent, brighter than the sun.

9. v. 51. Showing himself in the Holy Spirit and in the Son.

thanks, give thanks to the Sun of the Angels, who to this visible one has raised thee by His grace." Heart of mortal was never so disposed to devotion, and so ready, with its whole will, to render itself up to God, as I became at those words; and all my love was so set on Him that it eclipsed Beatrice in oblivion. It did not displease her; but she so smiled thereat that the splendor of her smiling eyes divided upon many things my mind intent on one.

I saw many living and surpassing effulgences make of us a centre, and make of themselves a crown; more sweet in voice than shining in aspect. Thus girt we sometimes see the daughter of Latona, when the air is so impregnate that it holds the thread which makes her zone.<sup>10</sup> In the court of Heaven, wherefrom I return, are found many jewels so precious and beautiful that they cannot be brought from the kingdom, and of these was the song of those lights. Let him who does not wing himself so that he may fly up thither, await tidings thence from the dumb.

After those blazing suns, thus singing, had circled three times round about us, like stars near to the fixed poles, they seemed to me as ladies not released from a dance, but who stop

10. v. 69. When the air is so full of vapor that it forms a halo.

silent, listening till they have caught the new notes. And within one I heard begin: "Since the ray of grace, by which true love is kindled, and which then in loving grows multiplied, so shines on thee that it conducts thee upward by that stair which, without reascending, no one descends,"<sup>11</sup> he who should deny to thee the wine of his flask for thy thirst, would not be more at liberty than water which descends not to the sea.<sup>12</sup> Thou wishest to know with what plants this garland is enflowered, which, round about her, gazes with delight upon the beautiful Lady who strengthens thee for heaven. I was of the lambs of the holy flock which Dominic leads along the way<sup>13</sup> where they fatten well if they do not stray.<sup>14</sup> This one who is nearest to me on the right was my brother and master; and he was Albert of Cologne,<sup>15</sup> and I Thomas of

11. v. 87. Once received into Paradise no one can descend from it but to ascend again: so in the second canto of *Purgatory*, vv. 91, 92, Dante says to Casella, "In order to return another time there where I am, I make this journey."

12. v. 90. He would be restrained against his nature, as water prevented from seeking the level of the sea.

13. v. 95. That is, he was of the Order of St. Dominic.

14. v. 96. Where one acquires spiritual good, if he be not distracted by the allurements of worldly things.

15. v. 98. So famed for his learning that he became known as Albertus Magnus, and was styled *Doctor Universalis*. He was born in 1193 and died in 1280.

Aquino.<sup>16</sup> If thus of all the rest thou wouldst be informed, come, following my speech, with thy sight circling around upon the blessed wreath. That next flaming issues from the smile of Gratian, who so aided one court and the other that it pleases in Paradise.<sup>17</sup> The next, who at his side adorns our choir, was that Peter who, like the poor woman, offered his treasure to Holy Church.<sup>18</sup> The fifth light, which is most beautiful among us,<sup>19</sup> breathes

16. v. 99. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Doctor Angelicus*, whose *Summa Theologiae* is the chief source of Dante's theological doctrine, and is still the authorized doctrinal text-book of the Roman Church. He was born about 1225 and died in 1274.

17. v. 105. Gratian was an Italian Benedictine monk, who lived in the twelfth century, and compiled the famous work known as the *Decretum Gratiani*, composed of texts of Scripture, of the Canons of the Church, of Decretals of the Popes, and of extracts from the Fathers, designed to establish the agreement of the civil and canon law, — a work pleasing in Paradise because promoting concord between the two authorities.

18. v. 108. Peter Lombard, a theologian of the twelfth century, known as *Magister Sententiarum*, from his compilation of extracts from the works of the Fathers relating to the chief doctrines of the Church, under the title of *Sententiarum Libri IV*. In the proem to his work he says that he desired, "like the poor widow" (*Luke* xxi. 1-4), "to cast something from his penury into the treasury of the Lord." His book was for a long time the favorite manual of theology in the Schools.

19. v. 109. Solomon.

from such love that all the world there below is greedy to know tidings of it :<sup>20</sup> within it is the lofty mind wherein wisdom so profound was put, that, if the truth be true, to see so much no second has arisen.<sup>21</sup> At its side behold the light of that candle which, below in the flesh, saw most inwardly the angelic nature, and its ministry.<sup>22</sup> In the next little light smiles that advocate of the Christian times, with whose discourse Augustine provided himself.<sup>23</sup> Now if thou ledest the eye of the mind, following my praises, from light to light, thou stayest already thirsting for the eighth. Therewithin,

20. v. 111. It was matter of debate among the doctors of the Church, whether Solomon was among the blessed or the damned.

21. v. 114. "Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart ; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." 1 *Kings* iii. 12.

22. v. 117. Dionysius the Areopagite, the disciple of St. Paul (*Acts* xvii. 34), to whom was ascribed a book of great repute, written by an unknown author, probably in the fifth or sixth century, *On the Celestial Hierarchy*.

23. v. 120. Paulus Orosius, who lived in the fourth and fifth centuries, and wrote at the request of St. Augustine, his *History against the Pagans*, to defend Christianity from the charge brought against it by the Gentiles of being the source of the calamities which had befallen the Roman world. His work might be regarded as a supplement to St. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*.

through seeing every good, the holy soul rejoices which makes the fallacious world manifest to him who hearkens to it well.<sup>24</sup> The body whence it was chased out lies below in Cieldauro,<sup>25</sup> and from martyrdom and from exile it came to this peace. Beyond, see flaming the glowing breath of Isidore, of Bede, and of Richard who in contemplation was more than man.<sup>26</sup> This one from whom thy look returns to me is the light of a spirit to whom, in his grave thoughts, it seemed that death came slow. It is the eternal light of Siger,<sup>27</sup> who, reading in the Street of Straw, syllogized invidious truths."

24. v. 126. Boethius, statesman and philosopher, who was born about 475, and died in 525; his work, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, was one of the books held in highest esteem by Dante. He cites it frequently in the *Convito*; see especially, ii. 13, and 16.

25. v. 128. Boethius, who was put to death in Pavia, in 525, was buried in the church of S. Pietro in Cielo d' Oro — St. Peter's of the Golden Ceiling.

26. v. 132. Isidore, bishop of Seville, died 636; the Venerable Bede, died 735; Richard, prior of the Monastery of St. Victor, at Paris, a mystic of the twelfth century; all eminent theologians.

27. v. 136. Siger of Brabant, who in the last half of the thirteenth century, as doctor in the University of Paris, gave instruction in the Rue du Fouarre. The meaning of the words *veri invidiosi*, "invidious truths" or "truths which were hated," is uncertain; but he took an active part in the



Then, as a horologe which calls us at the hour when the Bride of God<sup>28</sup> rises to sing matins to her Bridegroom that he may love her, in which the one part draws and urges the other, sounding *ting! ting!* with such sweet note that the well-disposed spirit swells with love, so did I see the glorious wheel move, and render voice to voice in concord and in sweetness which cannot be known save there where joy is everlasting.

disputes in the University, and it is stated, on somewhat uncertain authority, that he was put to death by the Court of Rome, at Orvieto.

28. v. 140. The Church.

## CANTO XI

*The Vanity of worldly desires. — St. Thomas Aquinas undertakes to solve two doubts perplexing Dante. — He narrates the life of St. Francis of Assisi.*

O INSENSATE care of mortals ! how defective are those syllogisms which make thee downward beat thy wings ! One was going after the laws, and one after the aphorisms,<sup>1</sup> and one following the priesthood, and one to reign by force or by sophisms, and one to rob, and one to civic business, one, involved in pleasure of the flesh, was wearying himself, and one was giving himself to idleness, when I, loosed from all these things, with Beatrice, up in Heaven was thus gloriously received.

After each<sup>2</sup> had returned to that point of the circle at which it was at first, it stayed still, as a candle in a candlestick. And within that light which first had spoken to me I heard,

1. v. 4. The Aphorisms of Hippocrates, meaning here, the study of medicine.

2. v. 13. Each of the lights which had encircled Beatrice and Dante.

as making itself more clear, it smiling began :  
 " Even as I am resplendent with its radiance,  
 so, looking into the Eternal Light, I apprehend  
 whence is the occasion of thy thoughts. Thou  
 art perplexed, and hast the wish that my speech  
 be explained in language so open and so full  
 that it may be level to thy sense, where I said  
 just now : ' Where they fatten well,'<sup>3</sup> and there  
 where I said : ' No second has been born ;'<sup>4</sup>  
 and here is need that one distinguish well.

" The Providence which governs the world  
 with that counsel, in which every created vision  
 is vanquished ere it reach its depth, in order  
 that the Bride<sup>5</sup> of Him, who with loud cries<sup>6</sup>  
 espoused her with His blessed blood, might go  
 toward her beloved, secure in herself and also  
 more faithful to Him, ordained two princes in  
 her favor, who on this side and that should be  
 to her for guides. The one was all seraphic  
 in ardor,<sup>7</sup> the other, through wisdom, was on  
 earth a splendor of cherubic light.<sup>8</sup> I will speak

3. v. 25. Canto x. 96.

4. v. 26. Canto x. 114. The phrase is slightly changed.

5. v. 32. The Church.

6. v. 32. " And Jesus [on the cross] cried with a loud voice." *Matthew* xxvii. 46 and 50.

7. v. 37. St. Francis of Assisi. The seraphs burn with ardent love, the cherubs shine with the splendor of the radiance of knowledge of God.

8. v. 39. St. Dominic.

of one, because in praising one, whichever be taken, both are spoken of, for to one end were their works.

“Between the Tupino and the water<sup>9</sup> which descends from the hill chosen by the blessed Ubald, hangs the fertile slope of a high mountain, wherefrom Perugia at Porta Sole<sup>10</sup> feels cold and heat, while behind it Nocera and Gualdo weep because of their heavy yoke.<sup>11</sup> From this slope, where it most breaks its steepness, a Sun rose upon the world, as this one sometimes does from the Ganges. Wherefore let him who talks of this place not say *Ascesi*,<sup>12</sup> which were to speak short, but *Orient*,<sup>13</sup> if he would speak properly. He was not yet very far from his rising when he began to make the

9. v. 43. The Chiassi, which flows from the hill near Gubbio chosen for his hermitage by St. Ubald.

10. v. 47. The gate of Perugia, which fronts Monte Subasio, on which Assisi lies, some fifteen miles to the south. The mountain makes it hot in summer, and cold in winter.

11. v. 48. Little towns, southeast of Assisi, held in subjection by Perugia.

12. v. 53. So the name of Assisi was sometimes spelled, and here with a play on *ascesi* (as if from *ascendere*) “I rose.”

13. v. 54. As the sun at the vernal equinox, the sacred season of the Creation and the Incarnation, rises in the due east or orient, represented in the geographical system of the time by the Ganges, so the place where this new Sun of righteousness arose should be called *Orient* or *dayspring*.

earth feel some comfort from his great virtue; for, while still a youth, he ran into strife with his father<sup>14</sup> for sake of a lady such as to whom, as unto death, no one unlocks the gate of pleasure; and before his spiritual court *et coram patre*<sup>15</sup> he was united to her; and thereafter from day to day he loved her more ardently. She, deprived of her first husband,<sup>16</sup> for eleven hundred years and more, despised and obscure, even till him had remained unwooed;<sup>17</sup> nor had it availed<sup>18</sup> to hear, that he, who caused fear to all the world, found her undisturbed with Amyclas at the sound of his voice;<sup>19</sup> nor had it availed to have been constant and undaunted, so that, where Mary remained below, she mounted on the cross with Christ.

But that I may not proceed too obscurely, henceforth in my diffuse speech take Francis and Poverty for these lovers. Their concord and their glad semblances made love, and won-

14. v. 59. Devoting himself to Poverty against his father's will.

15. v. 62. Before the Bishop of Assisi, and "in presence of his father," he renounced his worldly possessions.

16. v. 64. Christ.

17. v. 66. St. Francis was born in 1182.

18. v. 67. To procure suitors for her.

19. v. 69. When Caesar knocked at the door of Amyclas his voice caused no alarm, because Poverty made the fisherman secure. Lucan, *Pharsalia*, v. 515 ff.

der, and sweet regard<sup>20</sup> to be the cause of holy thoughts ; so that the venerable Bernard first bared his feet,<sup>21</sup> and ran following such great peace, and, running, it seemed to him that he was slow. O unknown riches ! O fertile good ! Egidius bares his feet and Sylvester bares his feet,<sup>22</sup> following the bridegroom ; so pleasing is the bride. Then that father and that master goes on his way with his lady, and with that family which the humble cord was now girding.<sup>23</sup> Nor did baseness of heart weigh down his brow for being the son of Pietro Bernardone,<sup>24</sup> nor for appearing marvellously despised ; but royally he opened his hard intention to Innocent, and from him received the first seal for his Order.<sup>25</sup> After the poor folk had

20. v. 77. In the hearts of those who beheld them.

21. v. 80. The followers of Francis imitated him in going barefoot. Bernard, a wealthy citizen of Assisi, was his first disciple. He distributed his goods among the poor, and embracing the rule of poverty gave his life to deeds of mercy. After the death of Francis he was chosen head of the Order.

22. v. 83. Egidius, the blessed Giles of Assisi, and Sylvester were not only two of the first, but also two of the most devoted followers of their master.

23. v. 87. The cord for their girdle, instead of the leathern belt commonly worn by the monastic orders ; whence the Franciscans were called Cordeliers.

24. v. 89. For being the son of a rich father, and being scoffed at for his own abject indigence.

25. v. 93. In or about 1210 Pope Innocent III. approved the Rule of St. Francis.

increased behind him, whose marvellous life would be better sung in the glory of the heavens, the holy purpose of this archimandrite<sup>26</sup> was adorned with a second crown by the Eternal Spirit, through Honorius.<sup>27</sup> And after that, through thirst for martyrdom, he had preached Christ and the others who followed him, in the proud presence of the Sultan,<sup>28</sup> and because he found the people too unripe for conversion, and in order not to stay in vain, had returned to the fruit of the Italian herbage,<sup>29</sup> on the harsh rock,<sup>30</sup> between the Tiber and the Arno, he received from Christ the last seal,<sup>31</sup> which his limbs bore for two years. When it pleased Him, who had allotted him to such great good, to draw him up to the reward which he had gained in making himself lowly,<sup>32</sup> he com-

26. v. 99. "The head of the fold:" a term of the Greek Church, designating the head of one or more monasteries.

27. v. 98. In 1223, Honorius III. confirmed the sanction of the Order.

28. v. 101. Francis, with some of his followers, accompanied the crusaders of the fifth crusade to Egypt in 1219, and is said to have been sent for by the Sultan of the land and to have preached before him.

29. v. 105. To the harvest of good grain in Italy.

30. v. 106. Mount Alvernia, in the Casentino, the upper valley of the Arno.

31. v. 107. The Stigmata.

32. v. 111. The word in the original which I translate



mended his most dear lady to his brethren as to rightful heirs, and commanded them to love her faithfully ; and from her bosom his illustrious soul willed to depart, returning to its realm, and for his body he willed no other bier.<sup>33</sup>

“ Think now what he was,<sup>34</sup> who was a worthy colleague to keep the bark of Peter on the deep sea to its right aim ! And this was our Patriarch :<sup>35</sup> wherefore thou canst see that whoever follows him as he commands loads good merchandise. But his flock has become so greedy of strange food<sup>36</sup> that it cannot but be scattered over diverse meadows ; and the farther his sheep, remote and vagabond, go from him, the more empty of milk do they return to the fold. Some of them indeed there are who fear the harm, and keep close to the shepherd ; but they are so few that little cloth furnishes their cowls. Now if my words are not faint, if thy hearing has been attentive, if thou

“ lowly ” is *pusillo*, which in its Latin form *pusillus* is used in the Vulgate in passages where in the English version we find “ little one ” or “ little. ” See *Matthew* xviii. 6, 10, 11 ; *Mark* ix. 41 ; *Luke* xii. 32, xvii. 2.

33. v. 117. St. Francis died in 1226.

34. v. 118. How holy he must have been.

35. v. 121. St. Dominic.

36. v. 124. The food of riches and ecclesiastical dignities, strange to the true flock.

recallest to mind that which I have said, thy wish will be content in part, because thou wilt see the plant wherefrom they are hewn,<sup>37</sup> and thou wilt see how the wearer of the thong reasons — ‘Where they fatten well if they do not stray.’ ”

37. v. 137. The plant of which the words are splinters or chips ; in other terms, “ thou wilt understand the whole ground of my assertion, and thou wilt see what St. Thomas Aquinas, wearer of the leathern thong of the Dominican Order, means, when he says that the flock of Dominic fatten, if they stray not from the road on which he leads them.”

## CANTO XII

*Second circle of the spirits of wise religious men, doctors of the Church and teachers. — St. Bonaventura narrates the life of St. Dominic, and tells the names of those who form the circle with him.*

SOON as the blessed flame took to speaking its last word the holy mill-stone<sup>1</sup> began to revolve, and had not wholly turned in its gyration before another enclosed it with a circle, and matched motion with motion, song with song; song which in those sweet pipes as much surpasses our Muses, our Sirens, as a primal splendor that which it reflected.<sup>2</sup> As two bows parallel and like in colors are turned across a thin cloud, when Juno gives the order to her handmaid,<sup>3</sup> the one without born of the one within (in manner of the speech of that wandering one<sup>4</sup> whom love consumed, as the sun does

1. v. 3. The circle of spirits surrounding Beatrice and Dante.

2. v. 9. As an original ray is brighter than one reflected.

3. v. 12. Iris.

4. v. 14. The nymph Echo.

vapors), and make the people here<sup>5</sup> to be presageful, by reason of the covenant which God established with Noah concerning the world, that it shall nevermore be flooded; so the two garlands of those sempiternal roses were turning around us, and so did the outer correspond to the inner. After the dance and the exalted great festivity, alike of the singing and of the flaming, light with light joyous and bland, had become quiet together at one instant and with one will, even as the eyes which must needs close and lift themselves together at the pleasure that moves them, from the heart of one of the new lights there came a voice, which made me seem as the needle to the star in turning me to its whereabouts; and it began:<sup>6</sup> "The love which makes me beautiful draws me to discourse of the other leader, by whom<sup>7</sup> so well it has been spoken here of mine. It is fit that where one is the other be led in, so that as they waged war united, so together may their glory shine.

"The army of Christ, which it cost so dear to arm afresh,<sup>8</sup> was moving behind the stand-

5. v. 16. On earth.

6. v. 31. It is St. Bonaventura, the biographer of St. Francis, who speaks. He became General of the Order in 1256, and died in 1276.

7. v. 33. By whom, through one of his brethren, St. Thomas Aquinas.

8. v. 38. The elect, who had lost grace through Adam's

ard,<sup>9</sup> slow, mistrustful, and scanty, when the Emperor who forever reigns made provision for his soldiery that were in peril, of His grace only, not because it was worthy, and, as has been said, succored His Bride with two champions, by whose deeds, by whose words, the people gone astray were brought back.

“In that region where the sweet Zephyr rises to open the new leaves wherewith Europe is seen to reclothe herself, not very far from the beating of the waves behind which, over their long course, the sun sometimes hides himself from every man,<sup>10</sup> sits the fortunate Callaroga, under the protection of the great shield on which the Lion is subject and subjugates.” Therein was born the amorous lover of the Christian faith, the holy athlete, benignant to his own, and harsh to his enemies;<sup>11</sup> and so soon as it was created, his mind was so replete with living virtue, that in his mother it made sin, were armed afresh by the costly sacrifice of the Son of God.

9. v. 38. The Cross.

10. v. 51. The sun sinking in the West rises over the Southern hemisphere, “the world without people.” *Hell*, xxvi. 117.

11. v. 54. Callaroga, now Calahorra, a city in Old Castile. On the shield of Castile two lions and two castles are quartered, one lion below and one above.

12. v. 57. St. Dominic, born in 1170.

her a prophetess.<sup>13</sup> After the espousals between him and the Faith<sup>14</sup> were completed at the sacred font, where they dowered each other with mutual salvation, the lady who gave the assent for him saw in a dream the marvellous fruit which should issue from him and from his heirs;<sup>15</sup> and in order that he might be construed as he was,<sup>16</sup> a spirit went forth from here<sup>17</sup> to name him with the possessive of Him whose he wholly was. Dominic<sup>18</sup> was he called; and I speak of him as of the husbandman

13. v. 60. His mother dreamed that she gave birth to a dog, black and white in color, with a lighted torch in its mouth, which set the world on fire; symbols of the black and white robe of the Order, and of the flaming zeal of its brethren. Hence arose a play of words on their name, *Dominicani*, as if *Domini canes*, "the dogs of the Lord."

14. v. 62. As Poverty became the bride of Francis, so the Faith becomes the bride of Dominic.

15. v. 66. The godmother of Dominic saw in dream a star on the forehead and another on the back of the head of the child, signifying the light that should stream from him over East and West.

16. v. 67. Literally, "in order that he might be what he was in construing;" *costrutto* is a forced rhyme, and makes the interpretation of the verse difficult, but the meaning is, "in order that when he was spoken of (in construing) his name might truly express his nature."

17. v. 68. From heaven.

18. v. 69. *Dominicus*, the possessive of *Dominus*, "Belonging to the Lord."

whom Christ elected to His garden to assist Him. Truly he seemed the messenger and familiar of Christ; for the first love that was manifest in him was for the first counsel which Christ gave.<sup>19</sup> Oftentimes was he found by his nurse upon the ground silent and awake, as though he would say: 'I am come for this.' O father of him truly Felix! O mother of him truly Joanna, if this, being interpreted, means as is said!<sup>20</sup>

"Not for the world,<sup>21</sup> for which men now toil, following him of Ostia and Thaddeus,<sup>22</sup> but for love of the true manna, he became in short time a great teacher, such that he set himself to go about the vineyard, which quickly grows white if the vinedresser be at fault; and of the Seat,<sup>23</sup> which was formerly more benign unto the

19. v. 75. "Sell that thou hast and give to the poor."  
*Matthew* xix. 21.

20. v. 81. Felix, signifying "happy," and Joanna, said to mean, "the grace of the Lord."

21. v. 82. The goods of this world.

22. v. 83. Henry of Susa, cardinal of Ostia (d. 1271) who wrote a much studied commentary on the Decretals, and Taddeo d' Alderotto of Bologna, who, says Giovanni Villani, recording his death in 1303, "was the greatest physician in Christendom." The thought is the same as that at the beginning of Canto xi., where Dante speaks of "one following the laws, and one the aphorisms."

23. v. 88. The Papal throne.



righteous poor (not by reason of itself but by reason of him who sits there and is degenerate<sup>24</sup>), he asked not to dispense or two or three for six,<sup>25</sup> not the fortune of the first vacancy, *non decimas, quae sunt pauperum Dei*,<sup>26</sup> but leave to fight against the errant world for that seed<sup>27</sup> of which four and twenty plants surround thee.<sup>28</sup> Then with doctrine and with will, together with the apostolic office,<sup>29</sup> he went forth like a torrent which a lofty vein presses out, and on the heretical stocks his onset smote with most vigor there where the resistance was the greatest. From him proceeded thereafter divers rills whereby the catholic garden is watered, so that its bushes are more living.

“If such was the one wheel of the chariot on

24. v. 90. The meaning is, that the change in the temper of the See of Rome is due not to the fault of the Papal dignity itself, but to that of the degenerate Pope.

25. v. 91. Not for license to compound for unjust acquisitions by devoting a part of them to pious uses, to take six and give but two or three.

26. v. 93. “Not the tithes which belong to God’s poor.”

27. v. 95. The true faith; “the seed is the word of God.” *Luke viii. 11.*

28. v. 96. The twenty-four blessed spirits of the two garlands.

29. v. 98. The authority conferred on him by Innocent III.

which the Holy Church defended herself and vanquished in the field her civil strife,<sup>30</sup> surely the excellence of the other should be very plain to thee, concerning whom Thomas before my coming was so courteous. But the track which the highest part of its circumference made is derelict;<sup>31</sup> so that there is mould where the crust was.<sup>32</sup> His household, which set out aright with their feet upon his footprints, are so turned round that they set the forward foot on that behind;<sup>33</sup> and soon shall there be sight of the harvest of the ill culture, when the tare will complain that the bin is taken from it.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless I say, he who should search our volume leaf by leaf<sup>35</sup> might still find a page where he would read: 'I am that which I am wont.' But it will not be from Casale nor from Acquasparta,<sup>36</sup> whence come such to the

30. v. 108. The heresies within her own borders.

31. v. 113. The track made by St. Francis is deserted.

32. v. 114. The change of metaphor is sudden; good wine makes a crust, bad wine makes mould in the cask.

33. v. 117. They go in an opposite direction from that followed by the saint.

34. v. 120. That it is thrown out from the bin in the granary. See *Matthew* xiii. 30.

35. v. 122. The volume is the Franciscan Order, the leaves are its members.

36. v. 124. Frate Ubertino of Casale, the leader of a party of zealots among the Franciscans, enforced the "writ-

writing that one evades it, and the other contracts it.

"I am the life of Bonaventura of Bagnoregio, who in great offices always set the sinister<sup>37</sup> care behind. Illuminato and Augustin are here, who were among the first barefoot poor that in the cord made themselves friends to God. Hugh of St. Victor<sup>38</sup> is here with them, and Peter Mangiadore, and Peter of Spain,<sup>39</sup> who down below shines in twelve books; Nathan the prophet, and the Metropolitan Chrysosing," that is, the written Rule of the Order, with excessive strictness; Matteo of Acquasparta, general of the Franciscans in 1257, relaxed it.

37. v. 129. The sinister, that is, the left hand care; care for temporal things; so in *Proverbs* iii. 16; "in sinistra illius divitiæ et gloria," "in her left hand riches and honor."

38. v. 133. Hugh (1097-1141), a noted theologian of the mystic school, of the famous abbey of St. Victor at Paris.

39. v. 134. Peter Mangiador, or Comestor, "the Eater," so called as being a devourer of books. He himself wrote a book famous in its time, the *Historia Scholastica*. He was canon of St. Victor and chancellor of the University of Paris, and died toward the end of the twelfth century.

Peter of Spain was born at Lisbon. His compendium of Logic, *Summae logicales*, in twelve books, was long held in high repute. He was made Cardinal Bishop of Tusculum in 1273, and was chosen Pope in 1276, taking the name of John XXI. He was killed in May, 1277, by the fall of the ceiling of the chamber in which he was sleeping, in the Papal palace at Viterbo. He is the only contemporary Pope whom Dante meets in Paradise.

stom,<sup>40</sup> and Anselm,<sup>41</sup> and that Donatus<sup>42</sup> who deigned to set his hand to the first art; Raban<sup>43</sup> is here, and at my side shines the Calabrian abbot Joachim,<sup>44</sup> endowed with prophetic spirit.

“The flaming courtesy of Brother Thomas, and his well advised discourse, moved me to envy<sup>45</sup> so great a paladin; and with me moved this company.”

40. v. 137. The Greek golden-mouth father of the Church, patriarch of Constantinople.

41. v. 137. Born about 1033 at Aosta in Piedmont, consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093, died 1109; “*magnus et subtilis doctor in theologia.*”

42. v. 137. The compiler of the treatise on Grammar (the first of the seven arts of the Trivium and the Quadri-  
vium) which was in use throughout the Middle Ages.

43. v. 139. Rabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz, in the ninth century; a great scholar and writer, “*cui similem suo tempore non habuit Ecclesia.*”

44. v. 140. Joachim, Abbot of Flora, in Calabria. He died in 1202. He wrote apocalyptic and prophetic treatises, in which he expounded in mystic terms the “Everlasting Gospel” of *Revelation* xiv. 6. His doctrine was that the dispensation of the Father and of the Son, contained in the Old and the New Testament, was to be speedily followed by that of the Holy Spirit, the consummation of the Divine revelation for the redemption of the world. During the thirteenth century this doctrine had a widespread influence.

45. v. 142. The meaning is, that the courtesy of Brother Thomas, a Dominican, in praising St. Francis, the founder of a rival Order, and the nature of his discourse moved me, a Franciscan, to a noble envy of his master St. Dominic, and hence to celebrate him.

## CANTO XIII

*St. Thomas Aquinas speaks again, and explains the relation of the wisdom of Solomon to that of Adam and of Christ, and declares the vanity of human judgment.*

LET him imagine,<sup>1</sup> who desires to understand well that which I now saw (and let him retain the image like a firm rock, while I am speaking), fifteen stars which in different regions vivify the heaven with brightness so great that it overcomes every thickness of the air; let him imagine that Wain<sup>2</sup> for which the bosom of our heaven suffices both night and day, so that with the turning of its pole it does not disappear; let him imagine the mouth of that horn<sup>3</sup> which

1. v. 1. To form an idea of the brightness and the motion of the two circles of spirits, let the reader, says the poet, imagine fifteen of the brightest separate stars, joined with the seven stars of the Great Bear, and with the two brightest of the Lesser Bear, to form two constellations like Ariadne's Crown, and to revolve one within the other, one following the movement of the other.

2. v. 7. Charles's Wain, the Great Bear, which never sets.

3. v. 10. The Lesser Bear may be imagined as having the shape of a horn, of which the small end is near the pole of the heavens around which the *Primum Mobile* revolves.

begins at the point of the axle on which the primal wheel goes round, — to have made of themselves two signs in the heavens, like that which the daughter of Minos made, when she felt the frost of death,<sup>4</sup> and one to have its rays within the other, and both to revolve in such manner that one should go first and the other after; and he will have as it were the shadow of the true constellation, and of the double dance, which was circling round the point where I was; since it is as much beyond our wont as the motion of the heaven which outspeeds all the rest is swifter than the movement of the Chiana.<sup>5</sup> There was sung not Bacchus, not Paean, but three Persons in the divine nature, and It and the human in one Person. The singing and the revolving completed each its measure, and those holy lights gave heed to us, making themselves happy from care to care.<sup>6</sup>

4. v. 15. Dionysus bore Ariadne, deserted by Theseus, to heaven, and changed her crown into a constellation.

If the reader imagine these twenty-four most brilliant stars to form two circular constellations, like Ariadne's crown, moving with the revolution of the Heavens, he will have a faint image of the two bright garlands of twelve saints each which were revolving around Dante and Beatrice.

5. v. 23. The Chiana was one of the most sluggish of the streams of Tuscany.

6. v. 30. Rejoicing in the change from dance and song to tranquillity, for the sake of giving satisfaction to Dante.

Then the light<sup>7</sup> within which the marvellous life of the poor man of God had been narrated to me broke the silence among those concordant divinities,<sup>8</sup> and said: "Since one straw is threshed, since its seed is now garnered, sweet love invites me to beat out the other.<sup>9</sup> Thou believest that into the breast, wherefrom the rib was drawn to form the beautiful cheek of her whose palate costs dear to all the world, and into that which, pierced by the lance, both after and before made such satisfaction that it overcomes the balance of all sin,<sup>10</sup> whatever of light it is allowed to human nature to have was all infused by that Power which made one and the other; and therefore thou wonderest at that which I said above, when I told that the good which is inclosed in the fifth light had no second. Now

7. v. 32. The light of St. Thomas Aquinas.

8. v. 31. Filled with the Divine Grace, "they are, as it were, gods." See *Convito*, iv. 20, 26.

9. v. 36. The saint has already explained the meaning of his saying, "Where they fatten well if they do not stray" (Canto x. 96 and xi. 139), and now proceeds to explain how it could properly be said of Solomon that "to see so much no second has arisen" (Canto x. 114), inasmuch as both Adam and Christ were endowed with fulness of knowledge, so far as was possible for human nature.

10. v. 42. Balanced against the sins of mankind, the life and the death of the Saviour made such satisfaction as to outweigh them all.



open thine eyes to that which I answer to thee, and thou wilt see thy belief and my speech become in the truth as the centre in a circle.

“That which dies not and that which can die are naught but the splendor of that idea which in His love our Sire brings to birth ;” for that living Light, which so streams from its Lucent Source that It is not disunited from It, nor from the Love which with them is intrined, doth of Its own goodness collect Its rays, as it were mirrored, in nine subsistences, Itself eternally remaining one. Thence It descends to the ultimate potentialities, downward from act to act becoming such, that finally It makes naught save brief contingencies : and these contingencies I understand to be the generated things which the moving heavens produce with seed and without it.<sup>12</sup> The wax of these, and

11. v. 54. The creation of things eternal and of things temporal alike is the resplendent manifestation of the idea which the triune God, in His love, generates. The living light in the Son, emanating from its lucent source in the Father, in union with the love of the Holy Spirit, the three remaining always one, pours out its radiance through the nine orders of the Angelic Hierarchy, who distribute it by means of the Heavens of which they are the Intelligences.

12. v. 66. Through the various movements and conjunctions of the Heavens, the creative light descends to the lowest elements, producing all the varieties of contingent things.

that which moulds it, are not of one mode, and therefore under the signet of the idea It more or less shines through;<sup>13</sup> whence it comes to pass that one same plant in respect to species bears better or worse fruit, and that ye are born with diverse dispositions. If the wax were exactly worked,<sup>14</sup> and the heavens were supreme in their power, the whole light of the seal would be apparent. But nature always gives it defective,<sup>15</sup> working like the artist who has the practice of his art and a hand that trembles. Yet if the fervent Love disposes and imprints the clear Vision of the primal Power, complete perfection is acquired there.<sup>16</sup> Thus of old the earth was made worthy of the complete

13. v. 69. The material of contingent or temporal things, and the influences of the Heavens which shape them, are of various sort, so that under the signet or impress of the idea, that is, in the specific shape which they receive according to the idea of God, the living Light shines through them more or less, and is apparent in them in different degree.

14. v. 73. If the material were always fit to receive the impression.

15. v. 76. Nature never affords the material perfect and capable of giving an exact impression of the idea.

16. v. 81. If, however, the Creator acts directly,—the fervent Love of the Holy Spirit imprinting the clear Vision of the Son which emanates from the primal Power of the Father,—there can be no imperfection in the created thing; it answers to the Divine idea, that is, to “the clear Vision” in the mind of God.

perfection of the living being; <sup>17</sup> thus was the Virgin made impregnate; <sup>18</sup> so that I commend thy opinion that human nature never was, nor will be, what it was in those two persons.

“Now, if I should not proceed farther, ‘How then was that one without a peer?’ would thy words begin. But, in order that that which is not apparent may clearly appear, consider who he was, and the cause which moved him to make request, when it was said to him: ‘Ask.’ <sup>19</sup> I have not so spoken that thou canst not clearly see that he was a king, who asked for wisdom, in order that he might be a worthy king; not to know the number of the motors here on high, <sup>20</sup> or if *necesse* with a contingent ever made

17. v. 83. Thus, by the immediate action of the Creator, the earth of which Adam was formed was made the perfect material for the complete perfection of the creature with a living soul.

18. v. 84. In like manner, by the direct act of the Creator.

19. v. 93. “In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. And Solomon said, . . . Thou hast made thy servant king . . . and I am but a little child. . . . Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.” 1 *Kings* iii. 5-9.

20. v. 98. The number of the Angelic Intelligences who move the Heavens.

*necesse*; <sup>21</sup> *non si est dare primum motum esse*, <sup>22</sup> or if in the semicircle a triangle can be made so that it should not have one right angle. <sup>23</sup> Wherefore if thou notest what I said and also this, a kingly prudence is that peerless seeing, on which the arrow of my intention strikes. <sup>24</sup> And if thou directest clear eyes to the 'has arisen,' thou wilt see it has respect only to kings, who are many, and the good are rare. With this distinction <sup>25</sup> take thou my saying, and thus it can stand with that which thou believest of the first father, and of our Beloved one. <sup>26</sup> And let this ever be as lead to thy feet, to make thee move slowly as a weary man, both to the *yea* and to the *nay* which thou seest not; for he

21. v. 99. If from two premises, one necessary and one contingent, a necessary conclusion is to be deduced.

22. v. 100. "If a prime motion is to be granted," that is, a motion not the effect of another.

23. v. 102. He did not ask through idle curiosity to know the number of the Angels; nor for the solution of a logical puzzle; nor for that of a question in metaphysics, or of a problem in geometry.

24. v. 104. "If thou understandest this comment on my former words, "to see so much no second has arisen," my meaning will be clear that his vision was unmatched in respect to the wisdom which it behoves a king to possess.

25. v. 109. Thus distinguishing, it is apparent that Solomon is not brought into comparison, in respect to perfection of wisdom, with Adam or with Christ.

26. v. 111. The Lord Jesus.

is very low down among the fools who affirms or denies without distinction, alike in the one and in the other case : because it happens, that oftentimes the hasty opinion bends in false direction, and then self love binds the intelligence.<sup>27</sup> Far more than in vain does he leave the bank, since he returns not such as he sets out, who fishes for the truth, and has not the art ;<sup>28</sup> and of this Parmenides, Melissus, Bryson,<sup>29</sup> are manifest proofs to the world, and many others who went on and knew not whither. Thus did Sabellius, and Arius,<sup>30</sup> and those fools who were as swords unto the Scriptures in making their straight faces crooked. Let not the folk be yet too confident in judgment, like him who reckons up the ears in the field ere they are ripe ; for I have seen the briar first show itself stiff and rugged all winter long, then bear the rose upon its top ; and once I saw a bark run

27. v. 120. The natural predilection for one's own opinion prevents the unprejudiced action of the intelligence.

28. v. 123. He who seeks the truth without regard to the method and means of obtaining it, ends his search involved in greater error than that in which he was at first ; as the fisherman who goes to fish without the required means returns empty-handed and exhausted.

29. v. 125. Heathen philosophers who went astray in seeking for the truth.

30. v. 127. Sabellius denied the Trinity, Arius denied the Consubstantiality of the Father and the Son.

straight and swift over the sea through all her course, and perish at last at entrance of the harbor. Let not dame Bertha or master Martin, seeing one rob, and another make offering, believe to see them within the Divine counsel :<sup>31</sup> for the one may rise and the other may fall."

31. v. 141. Let not any wiseacre fancy to understand the judgments of God, hidden in the mystery of predestination.

## CANTO XIV

*At the prayer of Beatrice, Solomon tells of the glorified bodies of the blessed after the Last Judgment. — Ascent to the Heaven of Mars. — Souls of the Soldiery of Christ in the form of a Cross with the figure of Christ thereon. — Hymn of the Spirits.*

FROM the centre to the rim, and so from the rim to the centre, the water in a round vessel moves, according as it is struck from without or within. This which I say fell suddenly into my mind as the glorious life of Thomas became silent, because of the similitude which was born of his speech and that of Beatrice, whom after him it pleased thus to begin :<sup>1</sup> “ This man has need, and he tells it not to you, neither with his voice nor as yet in thought, of going to the root of another truth. Tell him if the light

1. v. 9. The “ glorious life,” that is, the glorified spirit of St. Thomas, had spoken from his place in the ring of saints which formed a circle around Beatrice and Dante ; Beatrice begins now to speak from the centre where she stood ; and as the voice of the Saint had moved from the circumference to the centre, so hers proceeds from the centre to the circumference.



wherewith your substance blossoms will remain with you eternally even as it is now; and if it remain, tell how, after ye shall be again made visible,<sup>2</sup> it can be that it will not hurt your sight."

As, when urged and drawn on by increase of delight, those who are dancing in a ring all at once lift their voice and gladden their motions, so, at that ready and devout petition, the holy circles showed new joy in their turning and in their marvellous melody. Whoso laments because we die here to live there on high, has not seen here the refreshment of the eternal rain.<sup>3</sup>

That One and Two and Three which ever lives, and ever reigns in Three and Two and One, uncircumscribed, and circumscribing all things, was thrice sung by each of those spirits with such a melody that for every merit it would be adequate reward. And I heard in the divinest light of the smaller circle a modest voice,<sup>4</sup> perhaps such as was that of the Angel

2. v. 18. The souls of the blessed are hidden in the light which emanates from them; after the resurrection of the body they will become visible, but how will the eyes endure such brightness as will then be that of the saints?

3. v. 27. He who on earth laments having to die has never duly taken account of the joy of the perpetual effluence of the Grace of God upon the soul in Heaven.

4. v. 35. Probably that of Solomon, who in the tenth

to Mary, make answer: "As long as the festival of Paradise shall be, so long will our love radiate around us such a garment. Its brightness will follow our ardor, the ardor our vision, and that is great in proportion as it receives of grace above its own worth.<sup>5</sup> When the flesh, glorious and sanctified, shall be clothed on us again, our persons will be more acceptable through being all complete; wherefore whatever of gratuitous light the Supreme Good gives us will be increased,—light which enables us to see Him; so that our vision must needs increase, our ardor increase which by that is kindled, our radiance increase which comes from this. But even as a coal which gives forth flame, and by a vivid glow surpasses it, so that its own aspect is defended,<sup>6</sup> thus this effulgence, which already encircles us, will be vanquished in appearance by the flesh which all this while the earth covers; nor will so great a light have power to fatigue us, for the organs of the body will be strong for everything which can delight us." So sudden and ready both one and the

Canto, v. 109, is said to be "the light which is the most beautiful among us."

5. v. 42. The brightness of the garment of light proceeds from and is proportioned to the fervency of love, and that to the vision of God.

6. v. 54. The coal is seen glowing through the flame.

other choir seemed to me in saying "Amen," that truly they showed desire for their dead bodies, perhaps not only for themselves, but also for their mothers, for their fathers, and for the others who were dear before they became sempiternal flames.

And lo! round about, of a uniform brightness, arose a lustre, beyond that which was there, like an horizon which is growing bright. And as at rise of early evening new appearances begin in the heavens, so that the sight seems and seems not true, it seemed to me that there I began to see new subsistences, and a circle forming outside the other two circumferences.<sup>7</sup> O true sparkling of the Holy Spirit! how sudden and glowing it became to my eyes, which, vanquished, endured it not! But Beatrice showed herself to me so beautiful and smiling that it must be left among those sights which followed not my memory.

Therefrom my eyes regained power to raise themselves again, and I saw myself, alone with my Lady, translated to more exalted salvation.<sup>8</sup>

7. v. 29. This new circle, vast in circumference, like the horizon, is composed of the multitude of the spirits of the wise in the things of the Spirit, who now display themselves, shining in this sphere as the brightness of the firmament.

8. v. 84. To a higher grade of blessedness, that of the Fifth Heaven, the sphere of Mars.

That I was more uplifted I perceived clearly by the fiery smile of the star, which seemed to me ruddier than its wont. With all my heart and with that speech which is one in all men,<sup>9</sup> I made to God a holocaust such as was befitting to the new grace; and the ardor of the sacrifice was not yet exhausted in my breast before I knew that offering had been accepted and propitious; for with such a glow and such a ruddiness splendors appeared to me within two rays, that I said: "O Helios,<sup>10</sup> who dost so adorn them!"

Even as, distinct with less and greater lights, the Galaxy so whitens between the poles of the world that it makes even the wise to question,<sup>11</sup> thus, constellated in the depth of Mars, those rays made the venerable sign which joinings of quadrants in a circle make.<sup>12</sup> Here my memory overcomes my genius, for that Cross was flashing forth Christ, so that I know not to find worthy example. But he who takes his cross and follows Christ shall yet

9. v. 89. The unuttered voice of the soul.

10. v. 96. Whether Dante forms this word from the Hebrew *Eli* (my God), or adopts the Greek *ἥλιος* (sun), is uncertain.

11. v. 99. "Concerning the Galaxy philosophers have held different opinions." *Convito*, ii. 15.

12. v. 102. The cross formed by the intersection of two diameters of a circle, at a right angle one with the other

excuse me for that which I omit, when he beholds Christ lightening in that glow.

From horn to horn,<sup>13</sup> and between the top and the base, lights were moving, brightly scintillating as they met together and in their passing by. Thus here<sup>14</sup> are seen the atoms of bodies, straight and athwart, swift and slow, changing appearance, long and short, moving through the sunbeam, wherewith sometimes the shade is striped which people with skill and art contrive for their protection. And as a viol or harp, strung in accord of many strings, makes a sweet tinkling to one by whom the tune is not caught, thus from the lights which there appeared to me a melody was gathered through the Cross, which rapt me without my understanding the hymn. I was indeed aware that it was of lofty praise, because there came to me: "Arise and conquer!" as to one who understands not, and yet hears. I was so enamoured therewith that until then there had not been anything which had fettered me with such sweet bonds. Perchance my word appears too daring, in setting lower the pleasure from the beautiful eyes, gazing into which my desire has repose. But he who considers that the living seals<sup>15</sup> of every beauty have more

13. v. 109. From arm to arm of the cross.

14. v. 112. On earth.

15. v. 133. The Heavens, which are "the seal of

effect the higher they are, and that I had not there turned round to those eyes, may excuse me for that whereof I accuse myself in order to excuse myself, and may see that I speak truth ; for the holy pleasure is not excluded here, because it becomes the purer as it mounts.

mortal wax" (Canto viii. 127), increase in power as they are respectively nearer the Empyrean, so that every joy in each, as it is higher up, is greater than any in the heavens below. To this time Dante had felt no joy equal to that afforded him by this song, not even that which the eyes of Beatrice had afforded him in the preceding spheres. But now a still greater joy awaited him in turning to those eyes, to which, since he entered the Fifth Heaven, the Sphere of Mars, he had not yet turned, but which there, as elsewhere, were to afford the supreme delight.

The ascent from sphere to sphere is the type of the advance of the purified soul in knowledge of divine things, and of its deeper entrance into the mysteries of the faith. With each step the vision becomes clearer, but the things seen require interpretation, and the chief element in this spiritual progress is the revelation by Theology of the significance of these things. This is the joy which the eyes of Beatrice afford. For "the eyes of this Lady," says Dante, speaking in the *Convito* of Philosophy, "are her demonstrations, which, directed to the eyes of the understanding, enamour the delivered soul. O sweetest and ineffable looks, the sudden captors of the minds of men, which appear in the demonstrations in the eyes of Philosophy when she discourses with her lovers ! Truly in you is the salvation by which he is made blessed who looks on you, and is saved from the death of ignorance and sin." *Convito*, ii. 16, 27-37.

## CANTO XV

*Dante is welcomed by his ancestor, Cacciaguida. — Cacciaguida tells of his family, and of the simple life of Florence in the old days.*

A BENIGN will, wherein the love which righteously inspires always manifests itself, as cupidity<sup>1</sup> does in the evil will, imposed silence on that sweet lyre, and quieted the holy strings which the right hand of heaven slackens and draws tight. How shall those beings be deaf to righteous prayers, who, in order to give me the will to pray to them, were concordant in silence?<sup>2</sup> Well is it that he should grieve without end, who, for the love of thing which does not last, despoils himself forever of this love.

As, through the tranquil and pure evening skies, a sudden fire shoots from time to time, moving the eyes which were steady, and seems to be a star which changes place, save that from the region whence it was kindled nothing is

1. v. 3. Cupidity, that is, inordinate and ill-directed love. See *Purgatory*, xviii. 62–75.

2. v. 9. Leaving the joy of their song.



lost, and it lasts short while; so from the arm which extends on the right, ran a star of the constellation which is resplendent there, down to the foot of that Cross. Nor from its ribbon did the gem depart, but through the radial strip it ran along and seemed like fire behind alabaster. With like affection did the shade of Anchises stretch forward (if our greatest Muse merits belief), when in Elysium he perceived his son.<sup>3</sup>

“*O sanguis meus ! o superinfusa gratia Dei ! sicut tibi, cui bis unquam coeli janua reclusa ?*”<sup>4</sup> Thus that light; whereat I gave heed to it; then I turned back my sight to my Lady, and on the one side and the other I was awestruck; for within her eyes was glowing such a smile, that with my own I thought to touch the depth of my grace and of my Paradise.

3. v. 27. “And he (Anchises), when he saw Aeneas advancing to meet him over the grass, stretched forth both hands eagerly, and the tears poured down his cheeks, and he cried out, ‘Art thou come at length?’” *Aeneid*, vi. 684-7.

4. v. 30. “O blood of mine ! O overflowing grace of God ! To whom, as to thee, was ever the gate of Heaven twice opened ?” “Twice opened,” once now, and to be a second time opened after death. It is the spirit of Cacciaguida, the great-great-grandfather of Dante, who thus speaks. Nothing is known of him but what the poet tells in this and the next canto.

Then, joyous to hearing and to sight, the spirit added to his beginning things which I did not understand, so deep was his speech. Nor did he hide himself from me by choice, but by necessity, for his conception was set above the mark of mortals. And when the bow of his ardent affection was so relaxed that his speech descended towards the mark of our understanding, the first thing that was understood by me was : "Blessed be Thou, Trine and One, who art so greatly courteous in my seed." And he went on : "A pleasing and long-felt hunger, derived from reading in the great volume where white or dark is never changed,<sup>5</sup> thou hast relieved, my son, within this light<sup>6</sup> in which I speak to thee, thanks to her who clothed thee with plumes for the lofty flight. Thou believest that thy thought flows to me from Him who is First, even as from the unit, if that be known, ray out the five and six ;<sup>7</sup> and there-

5. v. 51. In the mind of God, in which there is no change, as there is in the books of men by erasures or additions.

6. v. 52. His own radiance.

7. v. 57. The thought of man rays out, reflected from the mind of God, the prime Unity, as all numbers proceed from the unit ; and the thought thus becomes known to the blessed gazing upon God. See Canto ix. 73-75. This is what Donne (Sermon xxiii.) calls "Gregory's wild speculation, *Qui videt videntem omnia, omnia videt*, because we

fore who I am, and why I appear to thee more joyful than any other in this blithe throng, thou askest me not. Thou believest the truth; for the lesser and the great of this life gaze upon the mirror in which, before thou thinkest, thou dost display thy thought. But in order that the sacred Love, in which I watch with perpetual vision, and which makes me thirst with sweet desire, may be fulfilled the better, let thy voice, secure, bold, and glad, sound forth the will, sound forth the desire, to which my answer is already decreed."

I turned me to Beatrice, and she heard before I spoke, and granted me a sign which made grow the wings to my desire. Then I began thus: "When the Prime Equality<sup>8</sup> appeared to you, the affection and the intelligence became of one weight for each of you; because the Sun which illumined and warmed you with its heat and with its light is of such equality that all similitudes are defective. But will and discourse in mortals, for the reason which is manifest to you, are diversely feathered in their wings.<sup>9</sup> Where-

shall see him that sees all things, we shall see all things in him, for then we should see the thoughts of men."

8. v. 74. God, all whose attributes are in perfect equality.

9. v. 81. But will and the discourse of reason, corresponding to affection and intelligence (v. 73), are unequal in

fore I, who am mortal, feel myself in this inequality, and therefore I give not thanks, save with my heart, for thy paternal welcome. Truly I beseech thee, living topaz, that dost ingem this precious jewel, that thou make me content with thy name?" "O leaf of mine, in whom, while only awaiting, I took pleasure, I was thy root." Such a beginning he, answering, made to me. Then he said to me: "He from whom thy family is named,"<sup>10</sup> and who for a hundred years and more has circled the mountain on the first ledge, was my son and was thy great-grand-sire; truly it behoves that thou shorten for him his long fatigue with thy works."<sup>11</sup> Florence, within the ancient circuit of her walls wherefrom she still takes both tierce and nones,<sup>12</sup> was abiding in peace, sober and modest. She had

mortals, by reason of their human imperfection; the affection is greater than the capacity to express it.

10. v. 92. Alighiero, from whom, it would appear from his station in Purgatory, Dante inherited the sin of pride, as well as his name.

11. v. 96. By thy prayers.

12. v. 90. The bell of the church called the Badia or Abbey, which stood close to the old walls of Florence and, rebuilt, still stands in the Piazza San Firenze, rang daily the hours for labor and for worship, and measured the time for the Florentines. Tierce is the first division of the canonical hours of the day, from six to nine; nones, the third, from twelve to three.

not necklace nor coronal, nor dames with ornamented shoes, nor girdle which was more to be looked at than the person. Not yet did the daughter at her birth cause fear to the father, for the time and dowry did not outrun due measure on this side and that.<sup>13</sup> She had not houses empty of families;<sup>14</sup> nor had Sardanapalus yet arrived there to show what may be done in a chamber.<sup>15</sup> Not yet by your Uccellatoio was Montemalo surpassed, which, as it has been surpassed in its rise, shall be so in its fall.<sup>16</sup> I saw Bellincion Berti<sup>17</sup> go girt with leather and bone,<sup>18</sup> and his dame come from her mirror without a painted face. And I saw him of the Nerli, and him of the Vecchio,<sup>19</sup> contented with

13. v. 105. Fear lest the age of the bride should be too young, her dowry too large.

14. v. 106. Palaces too large for their occupants, built for ostentation.

15. v. 107. The luxury and effeminacy of Sardanapalus were proverbial.

16. v. 111. The view from Montemalo, better known as Monte Mario, of Rome in its splendor was not yet surpassed by that of Florence from the height of Uccellatoio; and the fall of Florence shall be greater even than that of Rome.

17. v. 112. Bellincion Berti was "an honorable citizen of Florence," says Giovanni Villani; "a noble soldier," adds Benvenuto da Imola. He was father of the "good Gualdrada." See *Hell*, xvi. 37.

18. v. 113. With a plain leathern belt fastened with a clasp of bone.

19. v. 115. Two ancient and honored families.

the unlined skin,<sup>20</sup> and their dames with the spindle and the thread. O fortunate women! Each one was sure of her burial place;<sup>21</sup> and as yet no one was deserted in her bed for France.<sup>22</sup> One over the cradle kept her careful watch, and, comforting, she used the idiom which first amuses fathers and mothers.<sup>23</sup> Another, drawing the tresses from her distaff, told to her household tales of the Trojans, of Fiesole, and of Rome.<sup>24</sup> A Cianghella, a Lapo Salterello<sup>25</sup> would then have been held as great a marvel as Cincinnatus or Cornelia would be now.

“To so reposeful, to so fair a life of citizens, to such a trusty community, to such a sweet

20. v. 116. Clothed in garments of plain dressed skin not covered or lined with cloth.

21. v. 119. Not fearing to die in exile.

22. v. 120. Left by her husband gone to seek fortune in France, or other foreign lands.

23. v. 123. The playful and soothing baby-talk.

24. v. 126. These old tales may be read in the first book of Villani's Chronicle.

25. v. 128. Cianghella was a contemporary of Dante; “a most arrogant and intolerable woman, and very wanton in her life,” says Benvenuto da Imola. Lapo Salterello was a lawyer and judge, whom Benvenuto describes as “a rash and bad citizen, a litigious and tonguy (*linguosus*) man.” He was banished from Florence at the same time with Dante, March 10, 1302, his name standing third on the list. Cf. xvii. 61-63.

inn, Mary, called on with loud cries,<sup>26</sup> gave me; and in your ancient Baptistry I became at once a Christian and Cacciaguida. Moronto was my brother, and Eliseo; my dame came to me from the valley of the Po, and thence was thy surname. Afterward I followed the emperor Conrad,<sup>27</sup> and he belted me of his soldiery,<sup>28</sup> so much by good deeds did I come into his favor. Behind him I went against the iniquity of that law<sup>29</sup> whose people usurp your jurisdiction,<sup>30</sup> through fault of the Pastors. There by that foul folk was I released from the deceitful world, the love of which debases many souls, and I came from martyrdom to this peace."

26. v. 133. The Virgin, called on in the pains of childbirth. Cf. *Purgatory*, xx. 19-21.

27. v. 139. Conrad III. of Suabia. In 1147 he joined in the disastrous second Crusade.

28. v. 140. Made me a belted knight.

29. v. 143. The law of Mahomet.

30. v. 144. The Holy Land, by right belonging to the Christians, but of which they are dispossessed by the Saracens, through the fault of the Popes.



## CANTO XVI

*The boast of blood. — Cacciaguida continues his discourse concerning the old and the new Florence.*

O OUR petty nobility of blood! If thou makest folk glory in thee down here, where our affection languishes, it will nevermore be a marvel to me; for there, where appetite is not perverted, I mean in Heaven, I myself gloried in thee. Truly art thou a cloak which quickly shortens, so that, if naught be added from day to day, Time goes round about thee with his shears.

With the *You*,<sup>1</sup> which Rome was first to tolerate, in which her family least perseveres,<sup>2</sup> my words began again. Whereat Beatrice, who was a little withdrawn, smiling, seemed like her, who coughed at the first fault that is written of Guenever.<sup>3</sup> I began: "You are my

1. v. 10. The plural pronoun, used as a mark of respect. This usage was introduced in the later Roman Empire.

2. v. 11. The Romans no longer show respect to those worthy of it.

3. v. 15. Beatrice stands a little aside, theology having

father, you give me all confidence to speak; you uplift me so that I am more than I. By so many streams is my mind filled with gladness that it makes of itself a joy, in that it can bear this and not burst.<sup>4</sup> Tell me then, my beloved forefather, who were your ancestors, and what were the years that were reckoned in your boyhood. Tell me of the sheepfold of St. John,<sup>5</sup> how large it was then, and who were the people within it worthy of the highest seats."

As a coal is quickened into flame at the breathing of the winds, so I saw that light glow at my blandishments; and as it became more beautiful to my eyes, so with voice more sweet and soft, but not with this modern speech, it said to me: "From that day on which *Ave* was said,<sup>6</sup> unto the child-birth in which my mother, who now is sainted, was lightened of me with whom she had been burdened, this fire had come to its

no part in this colloquy. She smiles at Dante's vainglory, observant, like the Dame de Malehaut, who coughed at seeing the first kiss received by Queen Guenever from Sir Lancelot.

4. v. 21. It rejoices that it has capacity to endure such great joy.

5. v. 25. Florence, whose patron saint was St. John the Baptist.

6. v. 34. From the day of the Annunciation.

Lion ' five hundred, fifty, and thirty times to rekindle itself beneath his paw.<sup>8</sup> My ancestors and I were born in the place where the last ward is first reached by him who runs in your annual game.<sup>9</sup> Let it suffice thee to hear this of my elders; as to who they were, and whence they came hither, silence is more becoming than speech.

"All those able to bear arms who at that time were there, between Mars and the Baptist,<sup>10</sup> were the fifth of them who are living. But the citizenship, which is now mixed with Campi, with Certaldo and with Figghine,<sup>11</sup> was

7. v. 37. The Lion is the sign Leo in the Zodiac, appropriate to Mars by supposed conformity of disposition: —

"Mars

As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast."

Tennyson, *Maud*, part III.

8. v. 39. Five hundred and eighty revolutions of Mars are accomplished in a few months more than ten hundred and ninety years.

9. v. 42. The place designated was the boundary of the division of the city called that of "the Gate of St. Peter," where the Corso passes by the Mercato Vecchio or "Old Market." The races were run along the Corso on the 24th June, the festival of St. John the Baptist.

10. v. 47. Between the Ponte Vecchio, at the head of which stood the statue of Mars, and the Baptistery, — two points marking the circuit of the ancient walls.

11. v. 50. Small towns in the territory of Florence,

to be seen pure in the lowest artisan. Oh, how much better it would be that those folk of whom I speak were neighbors, and to have your boundary at Galluzzo and at Trespiano,<sup>12</sup> than to have them within, and to endure the stench of the churl of Aguglione,<sup>13</sup> and of him of Signa, who already has his eye sharp for bar-ratry!

“If the folk who are the most degenerate in the world<sup>14</sup> had not been as a stepdame unto Caesar, but like a mother benignant to her son, there is one who has become a Florentine,<sup>15</sup> and

from which, as from many others, there had been emigration to the thriving city, to the harm of its own people.

12. v. 54. It would have been better to keep these people at a distance, as neighbors, not to admit them as fellow-citizens, and to have narrow bounds for the territory of the city. Galluzzo and Trespiano are villages some two or three miles only from Florence.

13. v. 56. The churl of Aguglione was, according to Benvenuto da Imola, a lawyer named Baldo, “qui fuit magnus canis.” He became one of the priors of Florence in 1311. He of Signa is supposed to have been one Bonifazio, who, says Buti, “sold his favors and offices.”

14. v. 58. That is, the priesthood or the rulers of the Church: if they had not quarrelled with the Emperor, bringing about factions and disturbances in the world, there would not have been such shifting of population and of rank.

15. v. 61. “I have not discovered who this is,” says Buti. Simifonti was a stronghold in the Val d’ Elsa, which was destroyed by the Florentines in 1302.

is a money-changer and trader, who would have been turned back to Simifonti, where his grand-sire used to go about begging; Montemurlo would still belong to its Counts, the Cerchi would be in the parish of Acone, and perhaps the Buondelmonti in Valdigreve.<sup>16</sup> The intermingling of persons was ever the beginning of harm to the city, as the food which is loaded on is to the body.<sup>17</sup> And a blind bull falls more headlong than the blind lamb; and oftentimes one sword cuts more and better than five.

If thou regard Luni and Urbisaglia,<sup>18</sup> how they have gone, and how Chiusi and Sinigaglia are going their way after them, it will not appear to thee a strange thing or a hard, to hear how families are undone, since even cities have their term. All things of yours have their death even as yourselves; but it is concealed in some that last long, while lives are

16. v. 66. The Conti Guidi, unable to defend their stronghold of Montemurlo from the Pistoians, had been compelled to sell it to the Florentines. The Cerchi and the Buondelmonti had been forced by the Florentine Commune to surrender their fortresses and to take up their abode in the city, where they became powerful, and where the bitterness of intestine discord and party strife had been greatly enhanced by their quarrels.

17. v. 69. Food added to that already in process of digestion and which is consequently not assimilated.

18. v. 73. Cities once great, now fallen.

short. And as the revolution of the heaven of the Moon covers and uncovers the shores without a pause, so Fortune does with Florence. Wherefore what I shall tell of the high Florentines, whose fame is hidden by time, should not appear to thee a marvellous thing. I saw the Ughi, and I saw the Catellini, Filippi, Greci, Ormanni, and Alberichi, even in their decline, illustrious citizens; and I saw, as great as they were old, with him of La Sannella, him of L' Arca, and Soldanieri, and Ardinghi, and Bostichi.<sup>19</sup> Over the gate (which at present is laden with new felony<sup>20</sup> of such great weight that soon there will be jettison from the bark<sup>21</sup>), were the Ravignani, from whom the Count Guido is descended, and whosoever has since taken the name of the high Bellincione.<sup>22</sup> He

19. v. 93. All once great families, but now extinct, or fallen. It is of interest to note how many of these names are of Teutonic origin.

20. v. 95. Above the Gate of St. Peter rose the walls of the abode of the Cerchi, who, though not one of the old families of the city, had acquired great wealth and power, and making themselves the head of the White faction, became chief promoters of the civil strife which brought misery to Florence.

21. v. 96. The casting overboard was the exile in 1302 of many of the Cerchi with other leaders of the Whites.

22. v. 99. The Count Guido married Gualdrada, the daughter of Bellincione Berti. See Canto xv. 112, and *Hell*, xvi. 37.

of La Pressa knew already how one should rule, and Galigaio already had in his house the gilded hilt and pummel.<sup>23</sup> Great were already the column of the Vair,<sup>24</sup> the Sacchetti, Giuochi, Fifanti, and Barucci, and Galli, and they who blush for the bushel.<sup>25</sup> The stock from which the Calfucci sprang was already great,<sup>26</sup> and already the Sizii and Arrigucci had been drawn to the curule chairs.<sup>27</sup> Oh, how great did I see those who have been undone by their pride!<sup>28</sup> and the balls of gold<sup>29</sup> made Florence flourish with all their great deeds. So did the fathers of those who whenever your church is

23. v. 102. Symbols of knighthood; the use of gold in their accoutrements being reserved for knights.

24. v. 103. The family of the Pigli, whose scutcheon was, in heraldic terms, gules, a pale, vair; in other words, a red shield divided longitudinally by a stripe of the heraldic representation of the fur called vair.

25. v. 105. The Chiaramontesi, one of whom in the old days, being the officer in charge of the sale of salt for the Commune, had cheated both the Commune and the people by using a false measure. See *Purgatory*, xii. 104, 105.

26. v. 107. This stock was the house of the Donati.

27. v. 108. To high civic office.

28. v. 110. The Uberti, the great family of which Farinata (see *Hell*, Canto x.) was the most renowned member.

29. v. 110. The Lamberti, who bore golden balls on their shields. For Mosca de' Lamberti, see *Hell*, xxviii. 103-111.



vacant, become fat by staying in consistory.<sup>30</sup> The overweening race which is as a dragon behind him who flies, and to him who shows tooth or purse is gentle as a lamb,<sup>31</sup> already was coming up, but from small folk, so that it did not please Ubertin Donato that his father-in-law afterward made him their kinsman.<sup>32</sup> Already had Caponsacco descended into the market place down from Fiesole, and already was Giuda a good citizen, and Infangato.<sup>33</sup> I will tell a thing incredible and true: into the little circle one entered by a gate which was named for those of La Pera.<sup>34</sup> Every one who

30. v. 114. The Vismonti, and the Tosinghi, guardians of the Bishopric of Florence, who had the right, during any vacancy of the See, of administering its revenues, and thus after the death of a bishop, by securing delay in the appointment of his successor, grew fat on the episcopal revenues.

31. v. 117. The Adimari. Benvenuto da Imola reports that one Boccacino of this family, after Dante's banishment, got possession of his property, and always afterward was his bitter enemy.

32. v. 120. Ubertino de' Donati married a daughter of Bellincione Berti, and was displeased when her sister was afterwards given to one of the humble stock of the Adimari.

33. v. 123. There seems to be a touch of humor in these three names of "Head in bag," "Judas," and "Be-mired."

34. v. 126. The Peruzzi, who bore the pear as a

bears the beautiful ensign of the great baron<sup>35</sup> whose name and whose worth the feast of Thomas keeps fresh, from him had knighthood and privilege; although to-day he who binds it with a border unites himself with the populace.<sup>36</sup> Already there were Gualterotti and Importuni; and the Borgo<sup>37</sup> would even now be more quiet, if they had gone fasting of new neighbors. The house of which was born your weeping,<sup>38</sup>

charge upon their scutcheon. The incredible thing may have been that one of the gates of the city should have been named for a family now sunk so low as the Peruzzi. The "little circle" was the circle of the old walls.

35. v. 128. Hugh, imperial vicar of Tuscany in the time of Otho II. and Otho III., was "the great baron." He died on St. Thomas's Day, December 21st, 1006, and was buried in the Badia, the foundation of which is ascribed to him; there his monument is still to be seen, and there of old, on the anniversary of his death, a discourse in his praise was delivered. Several families, whose heads were knighted by him, adopted his arms, with some distinctive addition. His scutcheon was paly of four, argent and gules.

36. v. 132. Giano della Bella, the great leader of the Florentine commonalty in the latter years of the 13th century. He bore the arms of Hugh with a border of gold.

37. v. 134. The Borgo Sant' Apostolo, the quarter of the city in which these families lived, would have been more tranquil if the Buondelmonti had not come to take up their abode in it after the destruction of their stronghold of Montebuono in 1135.

38. v. 136. The Amidei, who were the source of much

by reason of its just indignation which has slain you, and put an end to your glad living, was honored, both itself and its consorts. Oh Buondelmonte, how ill didst thou flee its nuptials through the persuasions of another!<sup>39</sup> Many would be glad who now are sorrowful, if God had conceded thee to the Ema<sup>40</sup> the first time that thou camest to the city. But it behoved that Florence in her last hour of peace should offer a victim to that mutilated stone which guards the bridge.<sup>41</sup>

“With these families, and with others with them, I saw Florence in such repose that she had no occasion why she should weep. With these families I saw her people so glorious and so just, that the lily was never set reversed

of the misery of Florence, through their long and bitter feud with the Buondelmonti, by which the whole city was divided.

39. v. 141. The quarrel between the Amidei and the Buondelmonti arose from the slighting by Buondelmonte dei Buondelmonti of a daughter of the former house, to whom he was betrothed, for a daughter of the Donati, induced thereto by her mother. This was in 1215.

40. v. 143. The Ema, a little stream that has to be crossed in coming from Montebuono to Florence.

41. v. 147. That victim was Buondelmonte himself, slain by the outraged Amidei, at the foot of the mutilated statue of Mars, which stood at the end of the Ponte Vecchio; and since that murder Florence had had no peace.

upon the staff, nor made vermillion by divisions." 42

42. v. 154. The banner of Florence had never fallen into the hands of her enemies, to be reversed by them in scoff. Of old it had borne a white lily in a red field, but in 1250, when the Ghibellines were expelled, the Guelfs adopted a red lily in a white field, and this became the ensign of the Commune.

## CANTO XVII

*Dante questions Cacciaguida as to his fortunes. — Cacciaguida replies, foretelling the exile of Dante, and the renown of his Poem.*

As he who still makes fathers chary toward their sons came to Clymene, to ascertain concerning that which he had heard against himself; <sup>1</sup> such was I, and such was I perceived to be both by Beatrice, and by the holy lamp which previously for my sake had changed its station. Wherefore my Lady said to me: "Send forth the flame of thy desire in such wise that it may issue imprinted well by the internal stamp; not in order that our knowledge may increase through thy speech, but in order that thou accustom thyself to tell thy thirst, so that one may give thee drink."

1. v. 3. Phaëthon, son of Clymene by Apollo, having been told that Apollo was not his father, went to his mother to ascertain the truth. He makes fathers chary toward their sons, by reason of the calamitous result of Apollo's granting his prayer to be allowed to drive the horses of the chariot of the Sun.

“O dear root of me, who so upliftest thyself that, even as earthly minds see that two obtuse angles can not be contained in a triangle, so thou, gazing upon the Point to which all times are present, dost see contingent things, ere in themselves they are;<sup>2</sup> while I was conjoined with Virgil, up over the mountain which cures the souls, and while descending in the dead world, grave words were said to me of my future life; although I feel myself truly four-square against the blows of chance. Wherefore my wish would be contented by hearing what fortune is drawing near for me; for arrow foreseen comes more slack.”<sup>3</sup> Thus said I unto that same light which had spoken to me before, and, as Beatrice willed, was my wish confessed.

Not with ambiguous terms in which the foolish folk of old were entangled,<sup>4</sup> before the Lamb of God which taketh away sins had been slain,

2. v. 17. Dost see contingent events, that is, events which may or may not happen, with not less certitude than that of a geometrical axiom.

3. v. 27. This seems to have been a proverbial expression. The commentators cite a verse attributed to Ovid, but said not to be found in his works: — “*Nam previsa minus laedere tela solent.*”

In the Chronicle of Fra Salimbene, A. D. 1286, we find: — “*Minus enim jacula feriunt quae praevidentur.*”

4. v. 32. Not with riddles such as the oracles gave out before they fell silent at the coming of Christ.

but with clear words and with plain speech that paternal love, enclosed and made manifest by its own smile, made answer: "Contingency, which does not extend outside the volume of your matter,<sup>5</sup> is all depicted in the Eternal Vision. Yet thence it does not take necessity,<sup>6</sup> more than does a ship which is going down the stream from the eye in which it is mirrored. Therefrom,<sup>7</sup> even as sweet harmony comes to the ear from an organ, comes to my sight the time that is preparing for thee. As Hippolytus departed from Athens, by reason of his pitiless and perfidious stepmother, so from Florence thou must needs depart. This is willed, this is already sought for, and will soon be brought to pass, by him<sup>8</sup> who meditates it there where every day Christ is bought and sold. The blame will follow the injured party, in outcry, as is wont; but the vengeance will be testimony to the truth which dispenses it. Thou shalt leave everything beloved most dearly; and this is the arrow which the bow of exile shoots first. Thou shalt make proof how the bread of others savors of salt, and how hard a

5. v. 38. The material world.

6. v. 40. From its being seen in the Eternal Vision.

7. v. 43. From the Eternal Vision.

8. v. 50. Boniface VIII., in Rome, where, day in, day out, there is traffic in the things of God.



path is the descending and the mounting of another's stairs. And that which will weigh heaviest upon thy shoulders will be the evil and senseless company<sup>9</sup> with which thou wilt fall into this valley;<sup>10</sup> which all ungrateful, all mad and malevolent will turn against thee; but short while after, it, not thou, shall have the forehead red therefor. Of its bestiality, its own procedure will afford the proof; so that it will be well-becoming for thee to have made thee a party by thyself.

"Thy first refuge and first inn shall be the courtesy of the great Lombard<sup>11</sup> who bears the holy bird upon the ladder, who will have for thee such benign regard that, in doing and in asking, between you two, that will be first, which between others is the slowest. With him shalt thou see one,<sup>12</sup> who was so impressed, at his birth, by this strong star,<sup>13</sup> that his deeds

9. v. 62. The other Florentine exiles of the party of the Whites.

10. v. 63. This valley of exile and misfortune.

11. v. 71. Bartolommeo della Scala, lord of Verona, whose armorial bearings were the imperial eagle upon a ladder (*scala*).

12. v. 76. Can Grande della Scala, the youngest brother of Bartolommeo, and in 1312, his successor as lord of Verona. He was made Imperial Vicar in 1311, and on him the hopes of the Ghibellines rested.

13. v. 77. The planet Mars.

will be notable. Not yet are the people aware of him, because of his young age; for these wheels have revolved around him only nine years. But ere the Gascon cheat the lofty Henry<sup>14</sup> some sparkles of his virtue shall appear, in his caring not for money nor for toils. His magnificences shall hereafter be so known, that his enemies will not be able to keep their tongues mute about them. Look thou to him, and to his benefits; by him shall many people be transformed, rich and mendicant changing condition. And thou shalt bear hence written of him in thy mind, but thou shalt not tell it," —and he told things incredible to those who shall be present.<sup>15</sup> Then he added: "Son, these are the glosses on what was said to thee; behold the snares which are hidden behind few revolutions.<sup>16</sup> Yet I would not that thou hate thy neighbors, because thy life has a future far beyond the punishment of their perfidies."

14. v. 82. Before the Gascon Pope Clement V., under whom the Papal see was established at Avignon, shall deceive the Emperor, Henry VII., by professions of support, while secretly promoting opposition to his expedition to Italy in 1310.

15. v. 93. He told of deeds such that they shall seem past belief even to those who witness them.

16. v. 96. These are the explanations of the predictions of which thou hast sought the interpretation; few revolutions of the spheres will pass before thy troubles will begin.

When by its silence that holy soul showed it had finished putting the woof into that web which I had held out to it, warped,<sup>17</sup> I began, as he who, in doubt, longs for counsel from a person who sees, and wills uprightly, and loves: "I see well, my Father, how the time spurs on toward me to give me such a blow as is heaviest to him who most deserts himself; wherefore it is good that I arm me with foresight, so that if the place most dear be taken from me, I may not lose the others by my songs. Down through the world of endless bitterness, and over the mountain from whose fair summit the eyes of my Lady uplifted me, and then through heaven from light to light, I have learned that which, if I tell again, will have for many a savor of great bitterness; and if I am a timid friend to the truth, I fear to lose life among those who will call this time ancient." The light, within which my treasure that I had found there was smiling, first became flashing as a mirror of gold in the sunbeam; then it replied: "A conscience dark, either with its own or with another's shame, will indeed feel thy speech to be harsh; but nevertheless, all falsehood laid aside, make thy

17. v. 102. Cacciaguida had, as it were, woven in the pattern of the cloth, in telling of the future course of Dante's life.

whole vision manifest, and let then the scratching be where the itch is ; for if at the first taste thy voice shall be molestful, afterwards, when it shall be digested, it will leave vital nourishment. This cry of thine shall do as the wind, which strikes hardest the loftiest summits ; and that is no little argument of honor. Therefore only the souls which are known of fame have been shown to thee within these wheels, upon the mountain, and in the woeful valley ; for the mind of him who hears rests not, nor confirms its faith, by an example which has its root unknown and hidden, nor by other argument which is not apparent.”<sup>18</sup>

18. v. 142. Only the souls of personages well known have been shown to thee, to the end that their examples, when thou tellest of them, may be efficacious ; for examples of unknown persons, or arguments drawn from obscure facts, have little weight.

## CANTO XVIII

*The Spirits in the Cross of Mars.—Ascent to the Heaven of Jupiter.—Words shaped in light upon the planet by the Spirits.—Denunciation of the avarice of the Popes.*

Now was that blessed mirror enjoying only its own thoughts,<sup>1</sup> and I was tasting mine, tempering the bitter with the sweet, and that Lady who was leading me to God said: "Change thy thought; think that I am near to Him who lightens the burden of every wrong." I turned me round at the loving sound of my Comfort, and what love I then saw in the holy eyes, I here leave it; not only because I distrust my own speech,<sup>2</sup> but because of the memory which

1. v. 1. Literally, "its own word"; "the interior conception of the mind is called the word" (*S. T.* i. 34, 1). Dante speaks of Cacciaguida as "that blessed mirror," because the blessed spirits reflect the splendor of the Divine glory, and gazing upon the mind of God reflect also what they behold therein.

2. v. 10. "The tongue is not capable of completely following that which the understanding sees." *Convito*, iii. 3. 126. See also *Ibid.* iii. 4. 18.

cannot return so far above itself, unless another guide it. Thus much of that moment can I recount, that, again beholding her, my affection was free from every other desire.

While the Eternal Pleasure, which was ray-  
ing directly upon Beatrice, was contenting me  
with its second aspect<sup>3</sup> from her fair face, van-  
quishing me with the light of a smile, she said  
to me: "Turn thee, and listen, for not only in  
my eyes is Paradise."

As sometimes here the affection is seen in  
the countenance, if it be so great that the whole  
soul is taken up by it, so in the flaming of the  
holy effulgence to which I turned me, I recog-  
nized the will in it still to discourse somewhat  
with me. It began: "In this fifth seat<sup>4</sup> of the  
tree, which has life from its top, and always  
bears fruit, and never loses leaf, are blessed  
spirits, who below, before they came to heaven,  
were of great renown, so that every Muse  
would be rich with them.<sup>5</sup> Therefore gaze  
upon the arms of the Cross; he, whom I shall  
name, will there do the act which in a cloud its  
own swift fire does." At the naming of Joshua,

3. v. 18. Its aspect reflected from the eyes of Beatrice.

4. v. 28. Mars, the fifth resting-place in the ascent of  
Heaven.

5. v. 33. "Every Muse," that is, every poet; so in  
Canto xv. 26, Dante calls Virgil "our greatest Muse."

even as it was done, I saw a light drawn along the Cross; nor was the word noted by me before the fact. And at the name of the lofty Maccabeus<sup>6</sup> I saw another move revolving, and gladness was the whip of the top. Thus for Charlemagne and for Roland my attentive gaze followed two of them, as the eye follows its falcon as he flies. Afterward William, and Renouard,<sup>7</sup> and the duke Godfrey,<sup>8</sup> and Robert Guiscard<sup>9</sup> drew my sight along that Cross. Then, moving, and mingling among the other lights, the soul which had spoken with me showed me how great an artist it was among the singers of the heaven.

I turned me round to my right side to see in Beatrice my duty signified either by speech or by act, and I saw her eyes so clear, so joyous, that her semblance surpassed her other and her latest wont. And even as, through feeling more delight in doing well, a man from day to day becomes aware that his virtue

6. v. 42. Judas Maccabeus, who "was renowned to the utmost part of the earth." See 1 *Maccabees* ii.-ix.

7. v. 46. Two heroes of romance, William, Count of Orange, and Renouard his companion in arms, paladins of Charlemagne.

8. v. 47. Godfrey of Bouillon, the leader of the first crusade.

9. v. 48. The founder of the Norman kingdom of Naples.



makes advance, so I, seeing that miracle more adorned, became aware that my circling round together with the heaven had increased its arc. And such as is the change, in brief passage of time, in a pale lady, when her countenance discharges itself of the load of bashfulness, such was there to my eyes, when I turned, because of the whiteness of the temperate sixth star which had received me within itself.<sup>10</sup> I saw, within that torch of Jove, the sparkling of the love which was there, shaping out our speech to my eyes. And as birds, risen from the shore, as if rejoicing together at their pasture, make of themselves a troop now round, now of other shape, so within the lights<sup>11</sup> holy creatures were singing as they flew, and in their figures made of themselves now D, now I, now L.<sup>12</sup> At first, as they sang, they moved to their own notes, then as they became one of these characters, they stopped a little, and were silent.

O divine Pegasea,<sup>13</sup> who makest the wits

10. v. 69. The change, quick as the disappearance of a blush, was from the red light of Mars to the white light of Jupiter, a planet called by astrologers the "temperate" star, as lying between the heat of Mars and the coldness of Saturn. See *Convito*, ii. 14. 195-202.

11. v. 76. The sparkles of the love which was there.

12. v. 78. The first letters of *Diligite*, "Love ye," as shortly appears.

13. v. 82. An appellation appropriate to the Muses in

of men glorious, and renderest them long-lived, as they, through thee, the cities and the kingdoms, illumine me with thyself that I may set forth their shapes, as I have conceived them; let thy power appear in these brief verses!

They showed themselves then in five times seven vowels and consonants; and I noted the parts as they seemed as if spoken to me. *Diligite justitiam* were the first verb and noun of all the picture; *qui judicatis terram*<sup>14</sup> were the last. Then in the M of the fifth word they remained arranged, so that Jove seemed silver patterned there with gold. And I saw other lights descending where the top of the M was, and become quiet there, singing, I believe, the Good which moves them to Itself. Then, as on the striking of burning logs rise innumerable sparks, wherefrom the foolish are wont to draw auguries, so thence there seemed to rise again more than a thousand lights, and mount, some much and some little, according as the Sun which kindles them allotted to them; and, each having become quiet in its place, I saw the head and the neck of an eagle represented by that

general, whose fountain, Hippocrene, sprang up at the stamp of Pegasus.

14. v. 93. "Love righteousness, ye that be judges of the earth." *Wisdom of Solomon* i. 1.

patterned fire. He who paints there, has none who may guide Him, but He Himself guides, and from Him is recognized that virtue which is form for the nests.<sup>15</sup> The rest of the blessed spirits, which at first seemed content to lily themselves<sup>16</sup> on the M, with a slight motion followed out the imprint.

O sweet star, what and how many gems made plain to me that our justice is the effect of that heaven which thou dost ingem! Wherefore I pray the Mind, in which thy motion and thy virtue have beginning, that It look down there whence issues the smoke which vitiates thy radiance, so that now, a second time, It may be wroth at the buying and the selling in the temple, which was built up with blood and martyrdoms. O soldiery of Heaven whom I contemplate, pray ye for those on earth who are all gone astray after the bad example! Of old it was the wont to make war with swords, but now it

15. v. 111. The words are obscure; they may mean that a virtue, or instinct, inspired by God, similar to that in the bird which teaches it to build its nest, impelled the spirits in the shaping of these letters.

16. v. 113. *Ingigliare*, a word invented by Dante, and used only by him. The meaning is that these spirits seemed first like lilies on the M, then moved to join in forming the head and neck of an eagle. The eagle is the emblem of the Empire, which Dante held to be the Divine institution for maintaining justice upon earth.

is made by taking away, now here now there,<sup>17</sup> the bread which the pitying Father locks up from none.

But thou that writest only in order to cancel,<sup>18</sup> bethink thee that Peter and Paul, who died for the vineyard which thou art laying waste, are still alive. Thou canst say indeed: "I have my desire set so on him who willed to live alone, and for a dance was dragged to martyrdom,"<sup>19</sup> that I know not the Fisherman nor Paul."

17. v. 128. Making war by depriving men of the sacraments of the Church by means of excommunication and interdict.

18. v. 130. The Pope, who writes censures, excommunications, and the like, only that he may be paid to cancel them.

19. v. 135. The image of St. John Baptist was on the florin, which was the chief object of desire of the Pope.

## CANTO XIX

*The voice of the Eagle. — It speaks of the mysteries of Divine justice ; of the necessity of Faith for salvation ; of the sins of certain kings.*

WITH outspread wings appeared before me the beautiful image which the interwoven souls, joyful in their sweet fruition, were making. Each of them appeared as a little ruby on which a ray of the sun should glow so enkindled as to reflect him into my eyes. And that which it now behoves me to retrace, never did voice report, nor ink write, nor was it ever comprised by fancy ; for I saw, and also heard the beak speaking, and uttering with its voice both *I* and *My*, when in conception it was *We* and *Our*.<sup>1</sup>

And it began : “Through being just and pious am I here exalted to that glory which allows not itself to be surpassed by desire ; and on earth I left my memory such that the evil people there commend it, but follow not its story.” Thus one sole heat makes itself felt

I. v. 12. An image of the concordant will of the Just, and of the unity of Justice under the Empire.

from many embers, even as from many loves one sole sound issued from that image. Whereon I at once: "O perpetual flowers of the eternal gladness, ye which make all your odors seem to me only one, solve for me, by your breath, the great fast which long has held me hungering, not finding for it any food on earth. Well do I know that if the Divine Justice makes another realm in heaven its mirror,<sup>2</sup> yours does not apprehend it through a veil. Ye know how intently I prepare myself to listen; ye know what is that doubt<sup>3</sup> which is so old a fast to me."

As a falcon which, issuing from the hood, moves its head, and claps its wings, showing its will, and making itself fine; so I saw this emblem, which was woven of praise of the Divine Grace, become, with songs such as he knows who thereabove rejoices. Then it began: "He who turned the compasses at the verge of the world, and distributed within it so much occult and manifest, could not so imprint His Power on all the universe that His Word should not

2. v. 29. The reference is to the Order of the Thrones, the Intelligences who presided over the sphere of Saturn. In the ninth canto, verses 61, 62, Cunizza says: "Above are mirrors, ye call them Thrones, whence God in his judgments shines to us."

3. v. 33. Concerning the Divine Justice.

remain in infinite excess.<sup>4</sup> And this makes certain that the first proud one, who was the top of every creature, through not awaiting light, fell immature.<sup>5</sup> And hence it appears, that every lesser nature is a scant receptacle for that Good which has no end, and measures Itself by Itself. Therefore our vision, which must needs be one of the rays of the Mind with which all things are replete, cannot in its own nature be so potent as not to discern its origin far beyond that which is apparent to it.<sup>6</sup> Therefore the sight into the Eternal Justice which your world receives<sup>7</sup> penetrates within as the eye into the sea; which, though from the shore it can see the bottom, on the main it sees it not, and nevertheless it is there, but the depth conceals it. There is no light but that which comes from the serene which is never clouded; nay, rather there is darkness, either shadow of the

4. v. 45. The Word, that is, the thought or wisdom of God, must infinitely exceed the expression of it in the creation.

5. v. 48. Lucifer fell through pride, fancying himself, though a created being, equal to his Creator. Had he awaited the full light of Divine grace, he would have recognized his own inferiority.

6. v. 57. Our vision is not powerful enough to reach to the source from which it proceeds, for reach as far as it may, it must still see its source in God to be far beyond its range.

7. v. 59. It is the gift of God.



flesh, or its poison.<sup>8</sup> The hiding-place is now open enough to thee, which concealed from thee the living Justice concerning which thou didst make such frequent question;<sup>9</sup> for thou saidst: 'A man is born on the bank of the Indus, and no one is there who may tell of Christ, nor who may read, nor who may write; and all his wishes and acts are good, so far as human reason sees, without sin in life or in speech. He dies unbaptized, and without faith; where is this Justice which condemns him? where is his sin if he does not believe?' Now who art thou, that, with the short vision of a single span, wouldst sit upon a bench to judge a thousand miles away? Assuredly, for him who subtilizes with me,<sup>10</sup> if the Scripture were not above you, there would be marvelous occasion for doubting. Oh earthly animals! oh gross minds!<sup>11</sup>

8. v. 66. There is no light but that which proceeds from God, the light of Revelation. Lacking this, man is in the darkness of ignorance, which is the shadow of the flesh, or of sin, which is its poison.

9. v. 69. The hiding-place is the insufficiency of the human intellect to penetrate to the depth of the Divine decrees, the justice of which man, in his self-confidence, undertakes to question.

10. v. 82. Who questions concerning the mysteries of the Divine Justice of which I am the symbol.

11. v. 85. The Scriptures teach you that "the judg-

"The primal Will, which of Itself is good, has never moved from Itself, which is the Supreme Good. So much is just as is consonant with It; no created good draws It to itself, but It, raying forth, is the cause of that good."

As the stork circles above her nest, after she has fed her brood, and as the one that has been fed looks up at her, such became the blessed image, which impelled by so many counsels<sup>12</sup> moved its wings, and I so raised my brows. Wheeling it sang, and said: "As are my notes to thee who understandest them not, such is the Eternal Judgment to you mortals."

After those shining flames of the Holy Spirit became quiet, still in the sign which made the Romans reverend to the world, it began again: "To this kingdom no one ever ascended, who had not believed in Christ either before or after he was nailed to the tree. But behold, many cry Christ, Christ, who, at the Judgment, shall be far less near to him, than some one who knows not Christ; and the Ethiop will condemn such Christians when the two companies shall be

ments of God are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out;" why, foolish, do ye disregard them?

12. v. 96. The counsels of the multitude of spirits composing it, uniting in a single will.

separated, the one forever rich, and the other poor. What may the Persians say to your kings, when they shall see that volume open in which are written all their dispraises? <sup>13</sup> There shall be seen among the deeds of Albert that which will soon set the pen in motion, by which the kingdom of Prague shall be made a desert. <sup>14</sup> There shall be seen the woe which he who shall die by the blow of a wild boar is bringing upon the Seine by falsifying the coin. <sup>15</sup> There shall be seen the pride that quickens thirst, which makes the Scot and the Englishman mad, so that neither can keep within his own bounds. <sup>16</sup> The luxury shall be seen, and the effeminate living of him of Spain, and of him of Bohemia,

13. v. 114. The Persians, who know not Christ, will rebuke the sins of kings professedly Christians, when the book of life shall be opened at the Last Judgment.

14. v. 117. The devastation of Bohemia in 1303, by Albert of Austria (the "German Albert" of the sixth canto of *Purgatory*), will soon set in motion the pen of the recording angel.

15. v. 119. After his terrible defeat at Courtray, in 1302, Philip the Fair, to provide himself with means, debased the coin of the realm. He died in 1314 from the effects of a fall from his horse, overthrown by a wild boar in the forest of Fontainebleau.

16. v. 123. The wars of Edward I. and Edward II. with the Scotch under Wallace and Bruce were carried on with little intermission during the first twenty years of the fourteenth century.

who never knew valor, nor wished it.<sup>17</sup> The goodness of the cripple of Jerusalem shall be seen marked with an I, while an M shall mark the contrary.<sup>18</sup> The avarice and the cowardice shall be seen of him who guards the island of the fire, where Anchises ended his long life; and, to give to understand how paltry he is, the writing for him shall be in abridged letters which shall note much in little space.<sup>19</sup> And to every one shall be apparent the foul deeds of his uncle and of his brother,<sup>20</sup> who have

17. v. 126. By "him of Spain," Ferdinand IV. of Castile (1295-1312) seems to be intended; and by "him of Bohemia," Wenceslaus IV., "whom luxury and idleness feed;" see *Purgatory*, vii. 102.

18. v. 129. The virtues of the lame Charles II., King of Naples, 1285-1309, titular king of Jerusalem, shall be marked in Roman numerals with a one, but his vices with a thousand. The one virtue of Charles seems to have been his liberality; see Canto viii. 82.

19. v. 135. Frederick of Aragon, King of Sicily, 1296-1337, too worthless to have his many misdeeds written out in full; see *Purgatory*, vii. 119. Charles II. from 1296 to 1302 vainly attempted to dispossess Frederick of Sicily. When finally peace was made between them, Frederick married a daughter of Charles. Dante's scorn of Frederick was doubtless enhanced by his desertion of the Ghibellines after the death of Henry VII.

20. v. 137. James, King of Majorca and Minorca, and James, King of Aragon, whose worthlessness is referred to in *Purgatory*, vii. 120.

dishonored so eminent a race and two crowns. And he of Portugal,<sup>21</sup> and he of Norway<sup>22</sup> shall be known there; and he of Rascia,<sup>23</sup> who, to his harm, has seen the coin of Venice. Oh happy Hungary, if she allow herself no longer to be maltreated! and happy Navarre, if she arm herself with the mountains which bind her round!<sup>24</sup> And all should believe that, for earnest of this, Nicosia and Famagosta are now lamenting and complaining because of their beast which departs not from the side of the others."<sup>25</sup>

21. v. 139. Dionysius, King of Portugal, 1279-1325, to whom a base love of money-getting was ascribed.

22. v. 139. Hakon IV., misnamed Longshanks, 1299-1319, of whose cruel wars with Denmark Dante may have heard.

23. v. 140. Rascia, so called from a Slavonic tribe, which occupied a region south of the Danube, embracing a part of the modern Serbia and Bosnia. The kingdom was established in 1170. One of its kings, Stephen Ouros, who died in 1307, imitated the coin of Venice with a debased coinage.

24. v. 144. If she would make the Pyrenees her defence against France, into the hands of whose kings Navarre fell in 1304.

25. v. 148. The lot of these cities in Cyprus, which are now lamenting under the rule of Henry II. of the house of Lusignan, a beast who goes along with the rest in evil doing, is a proof in advance of what sort of fate falls to those who do not defend themselves.

## CANTO XX

*The song of the Just. — Princes who have loved righteousness, in the eye of the Eagle. — Spirits, once Pagans, in bliss. — Faith and Salvation. — Predestination.*

WHEN he who illumines all the world descends from our hemisphere so that the day on every side is spent, the heaven, which before is enkindled by him alone, suddenly makes itself again conspicuous with many lights, wherein one alone is shining.<sup>1</sup> And this act of heaven came to my mind when the ensign of the world and of its leaders became silent in its blessed beak ; because all those living lights, shining far more, began songs which have lapsed and fallen from my memory.

O sweet Love, that mantlest thyself with a smile, how ardent didst thou appear in those flutes<sup>2</sup> which had the breath alone of holy thoughts !

1. v. 6. One, that is, the sun, supposed to be the source of the light of the stars.

2. v. 14. That is, in those singers.

After the precious and shining stones, where-  
with I saw the sixth luminary<sup>3</sup> ingemmed, im-  
posed silence on their angelic chime, I seemed  
to hear the murmur of a stream which falls down  
clear from rock to rock, showing the abundance  
of its mountain source. And as the sound takes  
its form at the cithern's neck, and as at the vent  
of the bagpipe wind which enters it, thus, with-  
out pause of waiting, that murmur of the Eagle  
rose up through its neck, as if it were hollow.  
There it became voice, and thence it issued  
through its beak in form of words, such as the  
heart whereon I wrote them was awaiting.

"The part in me which in mortal eagles sees  
and endures the sun," it began to me, "must  
now be gazed at fixedly, because of the fires  
whereof I make my shape, those with which the  
eye in my head is sparkling are the chief of all  
their grades. He who shines in the middle,  
as the pupil, was the singer of the Holy Spirit,  
who bore about the ark from town to town;<sup>4</sup>  
now he knows the merit of his song, so far as  
it was the effect of his own counsel,<sup>5</sup> by the  
remuneration which is proportioned to it. Of

3. v. 17. The sixth planet, Jupiter.

4. v. 39. David. See 2 *Samuel* vi. ; cf. *Purgatory*,  
x. 64-67.

5. v. 41. So far as it proceeded from his own free will,  
open to the inspiration of grace.



the five which make a circle for my brow, he who is nearest to my beak consoled the poor widow for her son;<sup>6</sup> now he knows, by the experience of this sweet life and of its opposite, how dear it costs not to follow Christ. And he who on the rising arc comes next in the circumference of which I speak, by true penitence delayed death;<sup>7</sup> now he knows that the eternal judgment is not transmuted, when worthy prayer there below makes to-morrow's that which was to-day's. The next who follows,<sup>8</sup> with a good intention which bore bad fruit, made himself Greek, together with the laws and me, in order to give place to the Pastor;<sup>9</sup> now he knows how the ill deduced from his good action is not hurtful to him, although thereby the world be destroyed. And he whom thou seest in the down-bent arc was

6. v. 45. Trajan. See *Purgatory*, x. 73-93.

7. v. 51. King Hezekiah was sick unto death, and the prophet Isaiah declared to him that the Lord said: "Thou shalt die." And Hezekiah wept sore. And the Lord came again to Isaiah saying: "Turn again, and tell Hezekiah that I have heard his prayer and seen his tears, and will heal him, and will add unto his days fifteen years." See 2 *Kings* xx. 1-6; *Isaiah* xxxviii. 1-5.

8. v. 55. The Emperor Constantine.

9. v. 57. Constantine, by ceding Rome to the Pope, and by transferring the seat of empire to Constantinople, made himself, the laws, and the eagle, Greek.

William,<sup>10</sup> whom that land deplores which weeps for Charles and Frederick living;<sup>11</sup> now he knows how heaven is enamoured of a just king, and by the aspect of his effulgence makes it still seen. Who, down in the erring world, would believe that Rhipeus the Trojan<sup>12</sup> was the fifth of the holy lights in this circle? Now he knows much of that which the world cannot see of the divine grace, although his sight cannot discern the bottom."

Like a little lark that in the air expatiates, first singing, and then is silent, content with the last sweetness which satisfies her, such seemed to me the image of the imprint of the Eternal Pleasure, according to whose desire everything becomes that which it is.<sup>13</sup>

And though I was there, in respect to my

10. v. 62. William II., called "the Good," King of Sicily and Apulia, 1166-1169.

11. v. 63. The same Charles and Frederick whom the Eagle has reproached in the last canto, vv. 127-135.

12. v. 68.

"Rhipeus, iustissimus unus

Qui fuit in Teucris et servantissimus aequi." *Aeneid*, ii. 426-427.

"Rhipeus, the one justest man and heedfullest of right among the Trojans."

13. v. 78. So seemed the image (that is, the eagle), satiated with its bliss, whether in the speech or the silence imposed upon it by the Eternal Pleasure, in accordance with which all things fulfil their ends.

doubt,<sup>14</sup> like glass to the color which it clothes, it<sup>15</sup> endured not to bide its time in silence, but with the force of its own weight urged from my mouth: "What things are these?" whereat I saw great festival of flashing. Then at once, with its eye more enkindled, the blessed ensign answered me, in order not to keep me in wondering suspense: "I see that thou believest these things because I say them, but thou seest not how; so that, although believed in, they are hidden. Thou dost as one who fully apprehends a thing by name, but cannot see its quiddity unless another explain it. *Regnum coelorum*<sup>16</sup> suffers violence from fervent love, and from living hope which vanquishes the divine will; not in such wise as man overcomes man, but vanquishes it, because it wills to be vanquished, and, vanquished, vanquishes with its own benignity. The first life of the eyebrow and the fifth make thee marvel, because thou seest the region of the Angels painted with them. From their bodies they did not issue Gentiles, as thou believest, but Christians, with firm faith,

14. v. 79. How Trajan and Rhipeus could be in Paradise, since none but those who had believed in Christ were there. See Canto xix. 103-105.

15. v. 80. My doubt.

16. v. 94. "The kingdom of Heaven." *Matthew* xi. 12.

one in the Feet that were to suffer, one in the Feet that had suffered.<sup>17</sup> For the one came back unto his bones from Hell, where there is never return to righteous will; and that was the reward of living hope; of living hope, which put its power into the prayers made to God to raise him up, so that it might be possible for his will to be moved.<sup>18</sup> The glorious soul, of whom I speak, returning to the flesh, in which it was but little while, believed in Him who had power to aid it; and in believing was kindled to such fire of true love, that at its second death it was worthy to come unto this festivity. The other, through grace which distils from a fount so deep that creature never pushed the eye far as its primal wave, there below set all his love on righteousness; wherefore from grace to grace God opened his eye to our future redemption, so that he believed in it, and thenceforth endured no more the stench of paganism, and reproveth therefor the perverse folk. Those three Ladies whom thou hast seen

17. v. 105. Rhipeus died before the coming of Christ; Trajan after.

18. v. 111. In Hell there can be neither repentance nor a righteous will; and therefore, according to the legend, St. Gregory the Great prayed that the soul of Trajan, because of his great worth, might be restored to his body in life long enough for his will to turn to righteousness, and for him to profess his faith in Christ.

at the right wheel<sup>19</sup> were to him for baptism, more than a thousand years before baptizing.<sup>20</sup> O predestination, how remote is thy root from the vision of those who see not the First Cause entire! And ye, mortals, keep yourselves restrained in judging; for we who see God know not yet all the elect; and to us such defect is sweet, for our good is perfected in this good, — that what God wills we also will.”

Thus, to make my short sight clear, sweet medicine was given to me by that divine image. And as a good lutanist makes the vibration of the string accompany a good singer, whereby the song acquires more pleasantness, so I remember that, while it spake, I saw the two blessed lights<sup>21</sup> moving their flamelets to the words, just as the winking of the eyes concords.

19. v. 128. Of the Chariot drawn by the Griffon. See *Purgatory*, xxix. 121.

20. v. 129. Before the divine institution of the rite of baptism, his faith, hope, and charity served him in lieu thereof.

21. v. 106. Trajan and Rhipeus.



## CANTO XXI

*Ascent to the Heaven of Saturn.—Spirits of those who had given themselves to devout contemplation.—The Golden Stairway.—St. Peter Damian.—Predestination.—The luxury of modern Prelates.*

ALREADY were my eyes fixed again upon the countenance of my Lady, and my mind with them, and from every other intent it was withdrawn; and she was not smiling, but: "If I should smile," she began to me, "thou wouldst become such as Semele was when she became ashes; for my beauty, which along the stairs of the eternal palace is kindled the more, as thou hast seen, the higher the ascent, is so resplendent that, were it not tempered, at its effulgence thy mortal power would be as a bough shattered by thunder. We are lifted to the seventh splendor, which beneath the breast of the burning Lion now radiates downward mingled with his strength.<sup>1</sup> Fix thy mind behind thine eyes, and make of them mirrors for the figure which in this mirror shall be apparent to thee."

1. v. 15. The seventh splendor is Saturn, which was in the sign of the Lion, whence its rays fell to earth mingled with the strong influences of the sign.

He who should know what was the pasture of my sight in her blessed aspect, when I transferred me to another care, would know, by counterpoising one side with the other, how pleasing it was to me to obey my celestial escort.

Within the crystal which, circling round the world, bears the name of its illustrious leader, under whom all wickedness lay dead,<sup>2</sup> I saw, of the color of gold on which a sunbeam is shining, a ladder rising up so high that my eye followed it not. I saw, moreover, so many splendors descending along the steps, that I thought every light which appears in heaven had been poured down from it.

And as, by their natural custom, the daws, at the beginning of the day, move about together, in order to warm their cold feathers; then some go away without return, others wheel round to whence they started, and others, circling, make a stay;<sup>3</sup> such fashion it seemed to me was here in that sparkling which came together, so soon as it struck on a certain step;<sup>4</sup> and that one which stopped nearest to

2. v. 27. Saturn, in the golden age.

3. v. 39. Keep flying in a circle.

4. v. 42. The splendors descending together when they reached a certain step divided, like the daws, in various companies, and moved in various directions.



us became so bright that I said in my thought : " I see well the love which thou dost signify to me. But she, from whom I await the how and the when of speech and of silence, stays still ; wherefore I, contrary to desire, do well not to ask." Whereupon she, who saw my silence, in the sight of Him who sees everything, said to me : " Let loose thy warm desire."

And I began : " My own merit does not make me worthy of thy answer ; but for her sake who concedes to me the asking, O blessed life, that art hidden within thine own joy, make known to me the cause which has placed thee so near me ; and tell why in this wheel the sweet symphony of Paradise is silent, which below through the others so devoutly sounds." " Thou hast thy hearing mortal, as thy sight," it replied to me ; " therefore no song is here for the same reason that Beatrice has no smile. Down over the steps of the holy stairway I have descended so far, only to give thee glad welcome with my speech and with the light that mantles me ; nor has more love made me to be more ready, for as much and more love is burning up there, even as the flaming manifests to thee ; but the high charity, which makes us prompt servants to the Counsel that governs the world, allots here,<sup>5</sup> even as thou

5. v. 72. The high charity, that is the deep love which

observest." "I see well," said I, "O sacred lamp, how free love suffices in this Court for following the eternal Providence; but this is what seems to me hard to discern, why thou alone among thy consorts wert predestined to this office."<sup>6</sup> I had not come to the last word before the light made a centre of its middle, whirling itself like a swift millstone. Then the love that was within it answered: "A divine light is directed on me, penetrating through this wherein I embosom me; the virtue of which, conjoined with my vision, lifts me above myself so far that I see the Supreme Essence from which it emanates."<sup>7</sup> Thence comes the joy wherewith I flame, because to my vision, in proportion as it is clear, I match the clearness of my flame. But that soul in Heaven which is most enlightened,<sup>8</sup> that Seraph who has his eye most fixed on God, could not satisfy thy

inspires us, in accordance with the will of God, assigns its part to each spirit.

6. v. 78. At his first entrance into Paradise Dante had learned from Piccarda (Canto iii. 52-87) that the love with which the spirits in Heaven are filled made their wills one with the will of God; but concerning the question of predestination, which what he had seen in the sphere of Jupiter, and the discourse of the Eagle thereupon, had brought vividly to his mind, he is perplexed.

7. v. 87. Literally, "from which it is milked."

8. v. 91. With the Divine light.

demand ; because that which thou askest lies so deep within the abyss of the eternal statute, that from every created sight it is cut off. And when thou returnest to the mortal world, carry this back, so that it may no longer presume to move its feet toward such a goal. The mind which shines here, on earth is smoky ; wherefore consider how can it do there below that which it cannot do though Heaven assume it."

So did its words prescribe to me, that I left the question, and drew me back to ask it humbly who it was. "Between the two shores of Italy, and not very distant from thy native land, rise rocks so high that the thunders sound far lower down, and they form a ridge which is called Catria, beneath which a hermitage is consecrated which was wont to be devoted to worship only."<sup>9</sup> Thus it began again to me with its third speech, and then, continuing, said : "There in the service of God I became so steadfast, that, only with food of olive juice, lightly I used to pass the heats and frosts, content in contemplative thoughts. That cloister was wont to render in abundance to these heavens ; and now it is become so empty as needs

9. v. 111. Catria is a high offshoot to the east from the chain of the Apennines, between Urbino and Gubbio. Far up on its side was the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, belonging to the order of the Camaldolites.

must soon be revealed. In that place was I Peter Damian,<sup>10</sup> and Peter the sinner had I been in the house of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore.<sup>11</sup> Little of mortal life was remaining for me, when I was sought for and dragged to that hat<sup>12</sup> which ever is passed down from bad to worse. Cephas<sup>13</sup> came, and the great vessel of the Holy Spirit<sup>14</sup> came, lean and barefoot, taking the food of whatsoever inn. Now the modern pastors require one to prop them up on this side and that, and one to lead them, so heavy are they, and one to hold up their trains behind. They cover their palfreys with their mantles, so that two beasts go under one hide. O Patience, that dost endure so much!"

10. v. 121. A famous doctor of the Church in the eleventh century, chiefly noted for his endeavors to improve the discipline of the Church. He was for many years abbot of the monastery of Fonte Avellana.

11. v. 123. These last words are obscure, and have given occasion to much discussion, after which they remain no clearer than before. It is uncertain what house of Our Lady on the Adriatic shore is here referred to.

12. v. 125. The Cardinal's hat. In 1058 St. Peter Damian, much against his will, was made Cardinal Bishop of Ostia; he died in 1072.

13. v. 127. St. Peter. "Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone." *John* i. 42.

14. v. 128. St. Paul. "He is a chosen vessel unto me." *Acts* ix. 15.

At these words I saw more flamelets from step to step descending and whirling, and every whirl made them more beautiful. Round about this one they came, and stopped, and uttered a cry of such deep sound that here could be none like it; nor did I understand it, the thunder so overcame me.

## CANTO XXII

*Beatrice reassures Dante. — St. Benedict appears. — He tells of the founding of his Order, and of the falling away of its brethren. — Beatrice and Dante ascend to the Starry Heaven. — The constellation of the Twins. — Sight of the Earth.*

OPPRESSED with amazement, I turned me to my Guide, like a little child who always runs back thither where he most confides; and she, like a mother who quickly succors her pale and breathless son with her voice, which is wont to reassure him, said to me: "Knowst thou not that thou art in Heaven? and knowst thou not that Heaven is all holy, and whatever is done here comes from righteous zeal? How the song would have transformed thee, and I by smiling, thou canst now conceive, since the cry has so greatly moved thee; in which, if thou hadst understood its prayers, already would be known to thee the vengeance which thou shalt see before thou diest. The sword of here on high cuts not in haste, nor tardily, save to the seeming of him who, desiring or fearing, awaits

it. But turn thee round now toward the others ; for many illustrious spirits thou shalt see, if, as I bid, thou carry back thy look."

As was her pleasure I directed my eyes, and saw a hundred little spheres, which together were making themselves more beautiful with their mutual rays. I was standing as one who within himself represses the point of his desire, and attempts not to ask, he so fears the too-much. And the largest and most lustrous of those pearls came forward to make my wish concerning itself content. Then within it I heard : " If thou couldst see, as I do, the charity which burns among us, thy thoughts would be expressed ; but that thou, by waiting, mayst not retard thy high end, I will make answer to thee, even to the thought about which thou so restrainest thyself.

" That mountain <sup>1</sup> on whose slope Cassino is, was of old frequented on its summit by the deluded and ill-disposed people, and I am he who first bore up there the name of Him who brought to earth the truth which so high exalts us : and such grace shone upon me that I drew away the surrounding villages from the

1. v. 37. Monte Cassino, in the Kingdom of Naples, on which a temple of Apollo had stood, was chosen by St. Benedict (480-543) as his abode, and became the site, in 529, of the parent and most famous monastery of his Order.



impious worship which seduced the world. All these other fires were contemplative men, kindled by that heat which brings to birth holy flowers and fruits. Here is Macarius, here is Romualdus,<sup>2</sup> here are my brothers, who fixed their feet within the cloisters, and held their heart steadfast." And I to him: "The affection which thou displayest in speaking with me, and the good semblance which I see and note in all your ardors, have expanded my confidence as the sun does the rose, when she becomes open as wide as she has power to be. Therefore I pray thee, and do thou, Father, assure me if I am capable of receiving so great grace, that I may see thee with uncovered shape." Whereon he: "Brother, thy high desire shall be fulfilled up in the last sphere, where are fulfilled all others and my own. There every desire is perfect, mature, and whole; in that alone is every part there where it always was: for it is not in space, and it has not poles;<sup>3</sup> and our ladder reaches up to it, so that

2. v. 49. There was more than one St. Macarius; but St. Benedict probably here refers to St. Macarius of Alexandria, a disciple of St. Antony, who did much to promote the monastic rule in the East. He died in 405. St. Romualdus was the founder of the Order of Camaldoli in 1012.

3. v. 67. The Empyrean is immovable, having no axis with poles upon which it revolves, like the created spheres.

thus from thy sight it steals itself. Far up as there the patriarch Jacob saw it stretch its upper part, when it appeared to him so laden with Angels. But no one now lifts his feet from earth to ascend it; and my Rule remains for waste of paper. The walls, which used to be an abbey, have become dens, and the cowls are sacks full of bad meal. But heavy usury is not levied so counter to God's pleasure, as that fruit which makes the heart of the monks so mad; for whatsoever the Church has in keeping is all for the folk that ask it in God's name, not for kindred, or for others more vile.<sup>4</sup> The flesh of mortals is so soft that on earth a good beginning does not suffice from the springing of the oak to the forming of the acorn.<sup>5</sup> Peter began without gold and without silver, and I with prayers and with fasting, and Francis his convent with humility; and if thou lookest at the beginning of each, and then lookest again to where it has run astray, thou wilt see the white changed to dark. Truly, Jordan turned back, and the sea

4. v. 84. The sin of usury is not so displeasing to God as the misappropriation by the monks of the alms given for pious uses, to the enriching of their relatives, or even their paramours.

5. v. 87. This general reflection refers especially to the rapid relaxation of monastic rules from their original strictness.

fleeing when God willed, were more marvellous to behold than to see succor here.”<sup>6</sup>

Thus he said to me, and then drew back to his company, and the company closed together ; then like a whirlwind all gathered itself upward.

The sweet Lady urged me behind them, with only a sign, up over that ladder ; so did her virtue overcome my nature. But never here below, where one mounts and descends naturally, was there motion so rapid that it could be compared unto my wing. So may I return, Reader, to that devout triumph, for the sake of which I often bewail my sins and beat my breast, thou hadst not drawn out and put thy finger in the fire so quickly as I saw the sign which follows the Bull,<sup>7</sup> and was within it.

O glorious stars, O light impregnate with great virtue, from which I acknowledge all my genius, whatever it may be ; with you was born and with you was hiding himself<sup>8</sup> he who is father of every mortal life, when I first felt the Tuscan air ;<sup>9</sup> and then, when grace was bestowed

6. v. 96. Were God now to interpose to correct the evils of the Church, the marvel would be less than that of the miracles of old, because the need is greater.

7. v. 110. The sign of the Gemini, or Twins, in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars.

8. v. 115. That is, “was rising and was setting.”

9. v. 117. At the time of Dante’s birth the sun was in the sign of the Twins.

on me to enter within the lofty wheel which turns you, your region was allotted to me. To you my soul now devoutly sighs that it may acquire virtue for the hard pass which draws her to itself.<sup>10</sup>

"Thou art so near the ultimate salvation," began Beatrice, "that thou oughtest to have thine eyes clear and keen. And therefore ere thou enter farther into it, look back downward, and see how great a world I have already set beneath thy feet, in order that thy heart may present itself joyous to its utmost unto the triumphant throng which comes glad through this round ether." With my sight I returned through all and each of the seven spheres, and saw this globe "such that I smiled at its mean semblance; and that counsel I approve as best which holds it of least account; and he who thinks of other things may be called truly righteous. I saw the daughter of Latona enkindled without that shadow which had been the cause why I once believed her rare and

10. v. 123. The order of the Angelic Intelligences who are the movers of the Heaven of the Fixed Stars, is that of the Cherubim, whose name signifies Plenitude of Knowledge. It is their light which Dante craves to enable him fitly to complete his task in the description of his vision of God.

11. v. 134. The earth.

dense.<sup>12</sup> The aspect of thy son, Hyperion,<sup>13</sup> here I endured, and I saw how Maia and Dione<sup>14</sup> move around and near him. Then appeared to me the temperateness of Jove, between his father and his son,<sup>15</sup> and then was clear to me the varying which they make in their position. And all the seven were displayed to me, — how great they are and how swift they are, and how far apart they are in their abodes. While I was revolving with the eternal Twins, the little threshing-floor<sup>16</sup> which makes us so fierce all appeared to me, from its hills to its river-mouths.

Then I turned back my eyes to the beautiful eyes.

12. v. 141. From his station in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars Dante saw the other face of the moon than that which is seen from the earth, so that its dusky marks were not apparent to him. Cf. Canto ii. 49-148.

13. v. 142. The Titan Hyperion was held to be the father of Helios, the Sun.

14. v. 144. Maia and Dione were respectively the mothers of Mercury and Venus, and by their names these planets are here designated.

15. v. 146. Saturn and Mars.

16. v. 151. The inhabited earth.

## CANTO XXIII

### *The Triumph of Christ.*

As the bird, among the beloved leaves, having reposed on the nest of her sweet brood through the night which hides things from us, who, in order to see their longed-for looks and to find the food wherewith she may feed them, in which her heavy toils are pleasing to her, anticipates the time, upon the open twig, and with ardent affection awaits the sun, fixedly looking till the dawn may break; so was my Lady, standing erect and expectant, turned toward the region beneath which the sun shows least haste;<sup>1</sup> so that I, seeing her rapt and eager, became such as he who in desire would fain have something else and in hope is satisfied. But short while was there between one and the other *when*; of my awaiting, I mean, and of my seeing the heavens become more and more resplendent. And Beatrice said: "Behold the hosts of the Triumph of Christ, and all the fruit harvested by the revolution of these spheres."<sup>2</sup>

1. v. 12. The meridian.

2. v. 21. By the beneficent influences of the planets.

It seemed to me her face was all aflame, and her eyes were so full of joy that I must needs pass on without description.

As in the clear skies at the full moon Trivia<sup>3</sup> smiles among the eternal nymphs who paint the heaven through all its depths, I saw, above thousands of lamps, a Sun that was enkindling each and all of them, as ours kindles the supernal shows;<sup>4</sup> and through its living light the lucent Substance<sup>5</sup> gleamed so bright upon my face that I sustained it not.

Oh Beatrice, sweet guide and dear!

She said to me: "That which overcomes thee is a virtue against which naught defends itself. Here is the Wisdom and the Power that opened the roads between heaven and earth, for which there erst had been such long desire."

As fire is unlocked from a cloud, by dilating so that it has not room there, and contrary to its own nature falls down to earth, so my mind, becoming greater amid those feasts, issued from itself, and what it became it cannot remember.

"Open thine eyes and look on what I am; thou hast seen things such that thou art become

3. v. 26. An appellation of Diana, and hence of the moon.

4. v. 30. "With the light of the Sun all the other stars are informed." *Convito*, ii. 14. 125.

5. v. 32. Christ in his glorified body.



able to sustain my smile." I was as one who comes to himself from a forgotten vision and endeavors in vain to bring it back to mind, when I heard this invitation, worthy of such gratitude that it is never to be effaced from the book which records the past. If now all those tongues which Polyhymnia and her sisters made most rich with their sweetest milk should sound to aid me, it would not come to a thousandth of the truth in singing the holy smile and how it lighted up the holy face. And thus, depicting Paradise, the consecrated poem must needs make a leap, even as one who finds his way cut off. But whoso should consider the ponderous theme and the mortal shoulder which is laden therewith would not blame it if under this it tremble. It is no voyage for a little barque, this which my venturous prow goes cleaving, nor for a pilot who would spare himself.

"Why does my face so enamour thee that thou turnest not to the fair garden which blossoms beneath the rays of Christ? Here is the Rose,<sup>6</sup> in which the Divine Word became flesh: here are the lilies<sup>7</sup> by whose odor the good way was taken."

6. v. 73. The Virgin.

7. v. 74. The Apostles and Saints. The image is derived from St. Paul (*2 Corinthians* ii. 14): "Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ,

Thus Beatrice: and I, who to her counsels was wholly ready, again gave myself up to the battle of the feeble brows.

As my eyes, covered with a shadow, have ere now seen a meadow of flowers under a sunbeam which streams bright through a rifted cloud, so saw I many throngs of splendors flashed upon from above by burning rays, though I saw not the source of the gleams. O benignant Power which dost so imprint them, thou didst raise thyself on high to bestow scope there for my eyes, which were powerless.<sup>8</sup>

The name of the fair flower which I ever invoke, both morning and evening, wholly constrained my mind to gaze upon the greater fire.<sup>9</sup> And when the brightness and the magnitude<sup>10</sup> of the living star, which up there conquers as it conquered here below, were depicted in both my eyes, from within the mid heavens a torch, formed in a circle in fashion of a crown,

and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place." In the Vulgate the words are, "odorem notitiae suae manifestat per nos."

8. v. 87. The eyes of Dante, incapable of enduring the sight of the glorified body of Christ, are able, when that is withdrawn on high, to look upon those whom the light of Christ illumines.

9. v. 90. The Virgin, — *Rosa mistica*, — the brightest of all the host that remained.

10. v. 92. Literally, "the quality and the quantity."

descended, and engirt her, and revolved around her. Whatever melody sounds sweetest here below, and to itself most draws the soul, would seem a cloud which, being rent, thunders, compared with the sound of that lyre wherewith was crowned the beauteous sapphire by which the brightest Heaven is ensapphired. "I am Angelic Love, and I circle round the lofty joy which breathes from out the womb which was the hostelry of our Desire; and I shall circle, Lady of Heaven, until thou shalt follow thy Son and make the supreme sphere more divine because thou enterest it." Thus the circling melody sealed itself, and all the other lights made the name of Mary resound.

The royal mantle<sup>11</sup> of all the revolutions of the world, which is most fervid and most quickened in the breath of God and in His ways, had its inner shore so distant above us that sight of it, there where I was, did not yet appear to me. Therefore my eyes had not power to follow the crowned flame, which mounted upward after her offspring. And as an infant which, when it has taken the milk, stretches its arms toward its mother, because of its affection which flames up outwardly, each of these splen-

11. v. 112. The *Primum Mobile*, the ninth Heaven, which, enveloping the other spheres, revolves around them and causes them to revolve.

dors stretched upward with its flame, so that the exalted love which they had for Mary was manifest to me. Then they remained there in my sight, singing *Regina coeli*<sup>12</sup> so sweetly that never has the delight departed from me. Oh how great is the abundance which is heaped up in those most rich coffers which were good fields for sowing here below!<sup>13</sup> Here they live and enjoy the treasure which was acquired while they wept in the exile of Babylon, where the gold was left aside.<sup>14</sup> Here, under the exalted Son of God and of Mary, together with the ancient and with the new council, he triumphs in his victory who holds the keys of such glory.<sup>15</sup>

12. v. 128. "O Queen of Heaven;" the first words of an antiphon sung in the office of the Virgin at Compline on certain days after Easter. It is as follows, and its appropriateness here is manifest: "O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, for He whom thou wert worthy to bear rose as he promised; pray to God for us. Hallelujah."

13. v. 132. "Those most rich coffers," those blessed souls, now in the full enjoyment of Heaven, which were good ground for the seed of righteousness on earth.

14. v. 135. Despising the treasures of the world, in the Babylonish exile of this life, they laid up for themselves treasures in Heaven.

15. v. 139. Here St. Peter, in company with the saints of the Old and of the New Covenant, triumphs in the victory of the Church.

## CANTO XXIV

*St. Peter examines Dante concerning Faith, and approves his answer.*

“O FELLOWSHIP elect to the great supper of the blessed Lamb, who feeds you so that your desire is always full, since by grace of God this man foretastes of that which falls from your table, before death prescribe the time for him, give heed to his immense longing, and somewhat bedew him; ye drink ever of the fount whence comes that of which he is thinking.”<sup>1</sup> Thus Beatrice; and those glad souls made themselves spheres upon fixed poles, flaming brightly after the manner of comets. And as wheels within the fittings of clocks revolve, so that to him who gives heed the first seems quiet, and the last to fly, so these carols,<sup>2</sup> differently dancing, swift and slow, made me rate their riches.

1. v. 9. “Ye drink ever from the Divine source of the truth on which his mind is set, and concerning which he needs the enlightenment which ye can give him.”

2. v. 16. A carol was a dance with song; here used for the revolving circles of the spirits, the difference in the speed of which gave to Dante the measure of the respective blessedness of the saints who composed them.

From the one which I noted of greatest beauty, I saw issue a fire so happy that it left there none of greater brightness; and it revolved three times round Beatrice with a song so divine that my fancy repeats it not to me; wherefore my pen makes a leap, and I write it not, for our imagination, much more our speech, is of too vivid color for such folds.<sup>3</sup> "O holy sister mine, who dost so devoutly pray to us, by thine ardent affection thou dost unloose me from that fair sphere:" after it had stopped, the blessed fire directed to my Lady its breath, which spoke thus as I have said. And she: "O light eternal of the great man to whom our Lord left the keys, which he bore below, of this marvellous joy, test this man on points light and grave, as pleases thee, concerning the Faith, through which thou didst walk upon the sea. If he loves rightly, and hopes rightly, and believes, is not hidden from thee, for thou hast thy sight there where everything is seen depicted. But since this realm has made citizens by the true faith, it is well that to glorify it speech of it should fall to him."<sup>4</sup>

3. v. 27. The metaphor is a little obscure; the meaning seems to be, that our imagination and our speech are incapable of describing such delights as this divine song, even as too lively colors are unfit for depicting the folds in drapery.

4. v. 45. The meaning seems to be: Thou knowest

Even as the bachelor arms himself, — and dost not speak, until the master propounds the question, — in order to adduce the proof, not to decide it,<sup>5</sup> so, while she was speaking, I was arming me with every reason, in order to be ready for such a questioner, and for such a profession.

“Speak, good Christian, declare thyself; Faith, what is it?” Whereon I raised my brow to that light whence this was breathed forth, then turned me to Beatrice, and she made prompt signals to me that I should pour the water forth from my internal fount. “May the Grace,” I began, “which grants to me that I confess myself to the chief centurion cause my conceptions to be well expressed.” And I went on: “As the veracious pen, Father, of thy dear brother<sup>6</sup> (who with thee set Rome on the good track) wrote of it, Faith is the substance of things

that he has true faith, and since by faith one becomes a citizen of this realm, it is well that he should celebrate it.

5. v. 48. The bachelor at a university before proceeding to the Degree of Doctor was required to pass an examination or maintain a thesis propounded by a Master. Duncange cites from the old Statute of the University of Paris words which afford a good illustration of Dante’s verses: — “Quilibet Baccalaureus in Theologia . . . tenebitur respondere in Theologia ad minus semel de disputatione tentativa sub Magistro.”

6. v. 62. St. Paul.



hoped for, and evidence of things not seen :<sup>7</sup> and this appears to me its essence." Then I heard : " Rightly dost thou think, if thou understandest well why he placed it among the substances, and then among the evidences." And I thereon : " The deep things which grant unto me here the sight of themselves, are so hidden to eyes below that there their existence is in belief alone, upon which the lofty hope is founded, and therefore it takes the designation of substance ; and from this belief we needs must syllogize, without having other sight, wherefore it receives the designation of evidence."<sup>8</sup> Then I heard : " If all that is acquired down below for doctrine, were so understood, the wit of sophist would have no place there." These words were breathed forth from that enkindled love ; then it added : " Very well have the alloy and the weight of this coin been now gone over, but tell me if thou hast it in thy

7. v. 65. *Hebrews xi. 1.*

8. v. 78. The argument is as follows : The things of the spiritual world having no visible existence upon earth, the hope of blessedness rests only on belief unsupported by material proof ; this belief is Faith, and since on it alone does our high hope rest, it is properly called its substance, that is, what stands under it, its support. See, for this signification of substance, *S. T.* i. 29. 2. And since our belief supplies all our material for reasoning concerning spiritual things, Faith is also properly called evidence.

purse?" Whereupon I: "Yes, I have it so shining and so round that in its stamp nothing is doubtful to me." Then issued from the deep light which was shining there: "This precious jewel, whereon every virtue is founded, whence came it to thee?" And I: "The abundant rain of the Heavenly Spirit, which is shed over the Old and over the New parchments, is a syllogism which has proved it to me with such acuteness, that in comparison with this every demonstration seems to me obtuse."<sup>9</sup> I heard then: "The Old proposition and the New which are so conclusive to thee,—why dost thou hold them for Divine speech?"<sup>10</sup> And I: "The proof which discloses the truth to me are the works that followed, for which nature never heated iron, nor beat anvil."<sup>11</sup> It was replied

9. v. 96. The inspiration of the Holy Spirit manifest in the Old and the New Testament is an irresistible argument for our Faith.

10. v. 98. "The Old and the New Testament being thus the two propositions or premises from which thou drawest thy conclusion, what proof hast thou that thy conclusion that they are the word of God is correct?"

11. v. 101. The miracles afford proof that the Bible is the word of God. But, replies St. Peter, it is from the Bible that you learn of the miracles. How then do they afford proof of its inspiration? To which Dante answers, that the conversion of the world to Christianity without miracles would have been a miracle so much more marvellous than

to me: "Say, what assures thee that these works were? The very thing itself which requires to be proved, naught else, affirms it to thee." "If the world were converted to Christianity," said I, "without miracles, this alone is such that the others are not the hundredth part; for thou didst enter poor and fasting into the field to sow the good plant, which once was a vine and now has become a bramble."

This ended, the high holy Court resounded through the spheres a "We praise thee, O God," in the melody which up there is sung.

And that Baron <sup>12</sup> who thus from branch to branch, examining, had now drawn me on, so that we were approaching the last leaves, began again: "The Grace that holds courteous converse with thy mind has opened thy mouth thus far as it should be opened, so that I approve that which has issued forth, but now it is befitting to express what thou believest, and whence it was offered to thy belief." "O holy father, spirit who seest that which thou didst so believe that thou, toward the sepulchre, didst outdo

those reported in the Scriptures, that the latter must be believed.

12. v. 115. During the Middle Ages this term of high dignity was not infrequently applied to the most eminent among the Saints, and even to Christ himself.

younger feet,"<sup>13</sup> began I, "thou wishest that I should here declare the form of my ready belief, and also thou hast asked the cause of it. And I answer: I believe in one God, sole and eternal, who, unmoved, moves all the Heavens with love and with desire; and for such belief I have not only proofs physical and metaphysical, but that truth also gives it to me which hence rains down through Moses, through Prophets, and through Psalms, through the Gospel, and through you who wrote after the fiery Spirit made you reverend. And I believe in three Eternal Persons, and these I believe to be one essence, so one and so threefold that it will admit to be conjoined with *are* and *is*. Of the profound divine condition on which I touch, the evangelic doctrine many times sets the seal upon my mind. This is the beginning, this is the spark which afterwards dilates into a vivid flame, and like a star in heaven scintillates within me."

Even as a lord who hears what pleases him, thereon, rejoicing in the news, embraces his servant, soon as he is silent, thus, blessing me as he sang, the apostolic light, at whose command I had spoken, thrice encircled me when I was silent; so had I pleased him in my speech.

13. v. 126. "The other disciple did outrun Peter," but Peter first "went into the sepulchre." See *John* xx. 4-6.

## CANTO XXV

*St. James examines Dante concerning Hope. — St. John appears, with a brightness so dazzling as to deprive Dante, for the time, of sight.*

IF it ever happen that the sacred poem to which both heaven and earth have so set hand, that it has made me lean for many years, should overcome the cruelty which bars me out of the fair sheepfold, where a lamb I slept, foe to the wolves that give it war, then with other voice, with other fleece, a Poet will I return, and on the font of my baptism will I take the crown ; because there I entered into the Faith which makes the souls known to God ; and afterward Peter, for its sake, thus encircled my brow.

Then a light moved toward us from that sphere whence had issued the first-fruit which Christ left of His vicars ; and my Lady, full of gladness, said to me : “ Look, look ! behold the Baron for whose sake there below Galicia is visited.”<sup>1</sup>

1. v. 18. It was believed that St. James, the brother of

As when the dove alights near his mate, and each, circling and cooing, displays its affection to the other, so by the one great Prince glorious I saw the other greeted, praising the food which feeds them thereabove. But after their gratulation was completed, silent *coram me*<sup>2</sup> each stopped, so blazing that it overcame my sight. Then Beatrice, smiling, said: "Illustrious life, by whom the bounty of our basilica was written,<sup>3</sup> do thou make Hope resound upon this height; thou knowest that thou dost represent it as many times as Jesus displayed most brightness to the three."<sup>4</sup> "Lift up thy head, and

St. John, was buried at Compostella, in Galicia. His shrine was one of the chief objects of pilgrimage during the Middle Ages. Froissart says (iii. 30): "Or eurent ils affection et devotion d'aller en pelerinage au Baron Saint Jacques."

2. v. 26. "Before me." Here, as sometimes elsewhere, it is not evident why Dante uses Latin words.

3. v. 30. The reference is to the Epistle of James, which Dante, falling into a common error, attributes to St. James the Greater. The special words he had in mind may have been: "God, that giveth to all men liberally," i. 5; and "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights," i. 17. By "basilica" is meant the royal court of heaven.

4. v. 33. Peter, James, and John were chosen by their Master to be present at the raising of the daughter of Jairus, at his Transfiguration, and at his Agony in the Garden. As Peter personified Faith, and John Love, James was held to be the personification of Hope.

mind thou reassure thyself; for that which comes up here from the mortal world needs must be ripened in our rays." This comfort came to me from the second fire; whereon I lifted up my eyes unto the mountains which had bent them down before with excess of weight.

"Since, through grace, our Emperor wills that thou, before thy death, come face to face with his Counts in His most secret hall, so that, having seen the truth of this Court, thou mayest therewith confirm in thyself and others the Hope which there below rightly enamours, say what it is, and how thy mind blossoms with it, and say whence it came to thee;" thus further did the second light proceed. And that compassionate one, who guided the feathers of my wings to such lofty flight, thus in the reply anticipated me: <sup>5</sup> "The Church militant has not any child possessed of more hope, as is written in the Sun which irradiates all our band; therefore it is conceded to him, that from Egypt he should come to Jerusalem, to behold, before his term of warfare is completed.<sup>6</sup> The other

5. v. 51. Beatrice answers the question to which the reply, had it been left to Dante, might seem to involve self-praise.

6. v. 57. Before his term of service in the Church militant on earth has expired.



two points which are asked not for sake of knowing, but that he may report how greatly this virtue is pleasing to thee, I leave to him, for they will not be difficult to him, nor of vainglory, and let him answer thereto, and may the grace of God accord this to him."

As a scholar who follows his teacher, prompt and glad in that wherein he is expert, so that his worth may be disclosed: "Hope," said I, "is a sure expectation of future glory, which divine grace produces, and preceding merit.<sup>7</sup> From many stars this light comes to me, but he first instilled it into my heart who was the supreme singer of the Supreme Leader. 'Let them hope in Thee, who know Thy name,' he says in his theody;<sup>8</sup> and who knows it not, if he has my faith? Thou afterwards in thy Epistle<sup>9</sup> didst instil it into me together with his instilling, so that I am full, and upon others shower down your rain."

While I was speaking, within the living bosom of that fire a flash was trembling, sud-

7. v. 69. These words are taken directly from Peter Lombard, *Liber Sententiarum*, iii. 26.

8. v. 73. Divine song: "And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee." *Psalms* ix. 10.

9. v. 77. There is no direct mention of hope in the Epistle of James, but much which breathes its spirit, as, for instance, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh." v. 8.

den and frequent, in the manner of lightning. Then it breathed : " The love wherewith I still glow toward the virtue which followed me even to the palm, and to the issue of the field, wills that I breathe again to thee, who dost delight in it ; and it is my pleasure, that thou tell that which Hope promises to thee." And I : " The new and the old Scriptures set up the mark, and that points it out to me."<sup>10</sup> Of the souls whom God hath made his friends, Isaiah says that each one shall be clothed in his own land with a double garment,<sup>11</sup> and his own land is this sweet life ; and thy brother, far more explicitly, there where he treats of the white robes, makes manifest to us this revelation."<sup>12</sup>

At first, close on the end of these words, "*Sperent in te*"<sup>13</sup> was heard above us, to which

10. v. 89. These obscure words may perhaps be interpreted, the Scriptures indicate in symbolic terms that which we are to hope for, and these symbols point it out to me. In the next sentence Dante mentions two of the symbols, and declares their meaning.

11. v. 92. " Therefore in their land they shall possess the double : everlasting joy shall be unto them." *Isaiah* lxi. 7. In the possession by the friends of God of the double vesture of the glorified natural body and of the spiritual body, will be the fulness of their capacity of enjoyment of the bliss of Heaven.

12. v. 96. *Revelation* vii. 9-17.

13. v. 98. " Et sperent in te, qui noverunt nomen

all the carols made answer ; then among them a light became so bright that, if the Crab had one such crystal, winter would have a month of one sole day.<sup>14</sup> And as a glad maiden rises and goes and enters in the dance, only to do honor to the new bride, and not for any failing,<sup>15</sup> so did I see the brightened splendor come to the two who were turning in a wheel, such as was befitting their ardent love. It set itself there into the song and into the measure, and my Lady kept her gaze upon them, even as a bride silent and motionless. "This is he who lay upon the breast of our Pelican,<sup>16</sup> and who was chosen from upon the cross for the great office."<sup>17</sup> Thus my Lady ; but no more after than before her words did she move her look from its fixed

trum," is the Vulgate rendering of the first words of *Psalm ix.* 10 ; in the English version : "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee."

14. v. 102. If the sign of Cancer, which rises at sunset in early winter, had a star as bright as this light, the night would be light as day. It is the light with which St. John is clothed.

15. v. 105. Not for vanity, or love of display.

16. v. 113. A common type of Christ during the Middle Ages, because of the popular belief that the pelican killed its brood, and then revived them with its blood.

17. v. 114. "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother ! and from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." *John xix.* 27.

attention. As is he who gazes and endeavors to see the sun a little eclipsed, and who through seeing becomes sightless, so did I become in respect to that last fire, till it was said: "Why dost thou dazzle thyself in order to see a thing which has no place here?"<sup>18</sup> On earth my body is earth; and it will be there with the others until our number corresponds with the eternal purpose.<sup>19</sup> With the two robes in the blessed cloister are only those two lights which ascended:<sup>20</sup> and this thou shalt carry back unto your world."

At this word the flaming gyre became quiet, together with the sweet mingling made of the sound of the trinal breath,<sup>21</sup> even as, for avoiding of fatigue or danger, the oars, erst driven

18. v. 123. Dante seeks to see whether St. John is present in the earthly as well as the spiritual body; his desire having its source in the words of the Gospel: "Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? . . . Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die." *John* xxi. 22, 23. From these words arose a legend that, immediately on his apparent death, St. John, still in the body, was taken up to heaven.

19. v. 126. Till the predestined number of the elect is complete.

20. v. 128. Jesus and Mary, who had been seen to ascend. See Canto xxiii. vv. 86, 120.

21. v. 132. The voices of the three apostles.

through the water, all stop at the sound of a whistle.

Ah! how greatly was I disturbed in mind, when I turned to see Beatrice, at not being able to see her,<sup>22</sup> although I was near her, and in the happy world.

22. v. 138. Because blinded by the excess of light shining out from St. John.

## CANTO XXVI

*St. John examines Dante concerning Love. — Dante's sight restored. — Adam appears, and answers questions put to him by Dante.*

WHILE I was apprehensive because of my quenched sight, a breath which made me attentive issued from the effulgent flame that had quenched it, saying: "While thou art regaining the sense of sight which thou hast consumed on me, it is well that thou make up for it by discourse. Begin then, and tell at what thy soul is aimed, and make thy reckoning that thy sight is confounded in thee and not dead; because the Lady who conducts thee through this divine region has in her look the virtue which the hand of Ananias had." <sup>1</sup> I said: "At her pleasure, or soon or late, let the cure come to the eyes which were the gates when she entered with the fire wherewith I ever burn. The Good which makes this court content is Alpha and Omega of every scripture that Love reads

1. v. 12. The power of restoring sight. See *Acts ix.*  
18.

to me, either low or loud.”<sup>2</sup> That same voice which had taken from me fear in regard to the sudden dazzling, laid on me the charge to speak further, and said : “ Surely with a finer sieve it behoves thee to sift ; it behoves thee to tell who directed thy bow to such a target.” And I : “ By philosophic arguments and by authority that descends from here, such love must needs be impressed on me ; for the good, inasmuch as it is good, as soon as it is understood, kindles love ; and so much the greater as the more of goodness it comprises in itself. Therefore, to the Essence (wherein is such supremacy that every good which is found outside of It is naught else than a beam of Its own radiance), more than to any other, the mind of every one who discerns the truth on which this argument is founded must needs be moved in love.<sup>3</sup> This truth does he make plain to my intelligence, who demonstrates to me the first love of all the sempiternal substances.<sup>4</sup> The voice of the true Author makes it plain who, speaking of Him-

2. v. 16. “ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord.” *Revelation* i. 8.

3. v. 36. The argument is : Whatever is good kindles love for itself ; the greater the good the greater the love ; God is the supreme good and therefore the chief object of love.

4. v. 39. Aristotle is meant, who taught that the eternal and unmoved First Cause is the source of the motion of the heavens, “ the sempiternal substances,” by their desire for it.



self, says to Moses: 'I will make thee see all goodness.'<sup>5</sup> Thou, too, makest it plain to me, beginning the lofty announcement which below on earth, above all other trump, proclaims the secret of this place on high."<sup>6</sup> And I heard: "By human understanding, and by authorities concordant with it,<sup>7</sup> thy sovran love looks unto God; but say, further, if thou feelest other cords draw thee towards Him, so that thou mayst declare with how many teeth this love doth bite thee."

The holy intention of the Eagle of Christ was not latent to me; nay, rather I perceived whither he wished to lead my profession; therefore, I began again: "All those bitings which can make the heart turn to God have been concurrent unto my love; for the existence of the world, and my own existence, the death which He endured that I may live, and that which all the faithful hope even as I do, together with the

5. v. 42. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." *Exodus xxxiii.* 19.

6. v. 45. "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." These words of the eighth verse of the first chapter of *Revelation* are perhaps those to which Dante here refers. The Almighty, the source of all good, is of necessity the chief object of love.

7. v. 47. By reason of philosophic arguments, and of the authority of the Holy Scriptures.

aforesaid living consciousness,<sup>8</sup> have drawn me from the sea of perverted love, and have set me on the shore of the right. The leaves, wherewith all the garden of the Eternal Gardener is enleaved, I love in measure of the good borne unto them from Him."

Soon as I was silent a most sweet song resounded through the heavens, and my Lady said with the others: "Holy, Holy, Holy."

And as at a keen light sleep is broken by the spirit of sight, which runs to the splendor that goes from coat to coat,<sup>9</sup> and he who awakes shrinks from what he sees, so ignorant is his sudden wakening, until his judgment comes to his aid;<sup>10</sup> thus Beatrice chased away every mote from my eyes with the radiance of her own, which were refulgent more than a thousand miles; so that I then saw better than before; and, as one amazed, I asked concerning a fourth light which I saw with us. And my Lady: "Within those rays the first soul which the First Power ever created gazes with joy upon its Maker."

8. v. 61. That God is the supreme good, and therefore the supreme object of love.

9. v. 72. The spirit of the sight runs to meet the light which flashes through the successive coats of the eye.

10. v. 74. Waked of a sudden he knows not at first what has awaked him.

As the bough which bends its top at passing of the wind, and then uplifts itself by its own virtue which raises it, so did I, in amazement, while she was speaking; and then a desire to speak, wherewith I was burning, gave me again assurance, and I began: "O fruit, that wast alone produced mature, O ancient Father, to whom every bride is daughter and daughter-in-law, devoutly as I can, I supplicate thee that thou speak to me; thou seest my wish, and that I may hear thee speedily, I do not tell it."

Sometimes an animal, when covered up, so stirs, that its impulse must needs be apparent because of the corresponding movement which its wrapping makes; and in like manner the first soul made evident to me, through its covering, how gladly it came to do me pleasure. Then it breathed forth: "Without its being uttered to me by thee, I better discern thy wish, than thou whatever thing is most certain to thee; because I see it in the truthful Mirror which makes of Itself a reflection of other things, while nothing makes of itself a reflection of It." Thou

II. v. 108. All things are seen in God as if reflected in a mirror, the image of them is in Him; but nothing can reflect an image of God. "In the eternal Idea, as in a glass, the works of God are more perfectly seen than in themselves. . . . But it is impossible for a thing created to represent that

wouldst hear how long it is since God placed me in the lofty garden where this Lady made thee ready for so long a stairway ; and how long it was a delight to my eyes ; and the proper cause of the great wrath ; and of the idiom which I used and which I made. Now, my son, the tasting of the tree was not by itself the cause of so great an exile, but only the overpassing of the bound. In that place whence thy Lady moved Virgil, I longed for this assembly during four thousand three hundred and two revolutions of the sun ; and while I was on earth I saw him return to all the lights of his path<sup>12</sup> nine hundred and thirty times. The tongue which I spoke was all extinct long before the people of Nimrod attempted their unaccomplishable work ; for never was any product of the reason durable for ever, because of human liking, which alters, following the heavens.<sup>13</sup> That man speaks is work of nature ; but, thus or thus, nature then leaves to you to do according as it pleases you. Before I descended to the infernal anguish, the Supreme Good, whence comes the gladness that

which is increated.” John Norton, *The Orthodox Evangelist*, 1654, p. 332.

12. v. 122. In his course through the Zodiac.

13. v. 129. Speech, a product of human reason, changes according to the pleasure of man, which alters from time to time under the influence of the heavens.

swathes me, was on earth called *I*; afterwards it was called *El*; <sup>14</sup> and that must needs be, <sup>15</sup> for the custom of mortals is as a leaf on a branch, which goes away and another comes. On the mountain which rises highest from the wave I was, with pure life and sinful, from the first hour to that which follows the sixth, when the sun changes quadrant.” <sup>16</sup>

14. v. 136. *I* is here to be pronounced *jah*, and the meaning is, that God was known in the primitive language by a letter corresponding to the Hebrew letter Jod, the initial of the name Jah: “Sing unto God . . . extol Him . . . by his name *Jah*.” *Psalm* lxviii. 4.

15. v. 136. Such change in the name was inevitable, because of the changing customs of thought and speech.

16. v. 142. Adam’s stay in the Earthly Paradise, on the summit of the mount of Purgatory, was thus a little more than six hours; the sun changes quadrant, that is, completes his course through the fourth part of a circle, with every six hours.

## CANTO XXVII

*Denunciation by St. Peter of his degenerate successors. — Dante gazes upon the Earth. — Ascent of Beatrice and Dante to the Crystalline Heaven. — Its nature. — Beatrice rebukes the covetousness of mortals.*

“To the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit be glory,” all Paradise began, so that the sweet song was inebriating me. That which I was seeing seemed to me a smile of the universe; for my inebriation was entering through the hearing and through the sight. O joy! O ineffable gladness! O life entire of love and of peace! O riches secure, without longing!<sup>1</sup>

Before my eyes the four torches were standing enkindled, and that which had come first began to make itself more vivid, and in its semblance became such as Jupiter would become, if he and Mars were birds, and should exchange plumage.<sup>2</sup> The Providence which here assigns turn and office, had imposed silence on the blessed choir on every side, when I heard:

1. v. 9. Which leave nothing for desire.

2. v. 15. The pure white light becoming red, as if the planet Jupiter were to change color with Mars.

“ If I change color, marvel not ; for, as I speak, thou shalt see all these change color. He who on earth usurps my place, my place, my place, which is vacant in the presence of the Son of God,<sup>3</sup> has made of my cemetery a sewer of blood and of filth, wherewith the Perverse One who fell from here above, below there is placated.”

With that color which, by reason of the opposite sun, paints the cloud at evening and at morning, I then saw the whole Heaven overspread. And as a modest lady who abides sure of herself, and at the fault of another, on only hearing of it, becomes timid, thus did Beatrice change semblance ; and such eclipse, I believe, there was in heaven when the Supreme Power suffered.

Then his words proceeded, in a voice so transmuted from itself that his countenance was not more changed : “ The Bride of Christ was not nurtured on my blood, and that of Linus and of Cletus, to be employed for acquist of gold ; but for acquist of this glad life Sixtus and Pius and Calixtus and Urban<sup>4</sup> shed their blood after

3. v. 24. Dante held that Boniface VIII. had no right to the Papal throne, because his election to it lacked validity, having taken place while Celestine V., his predecessor, was still alive, and having been secured by bribery and deception.

4. v. 44. Early Popes, martyred for the faith.



much weeping. It was not our intention that part of the Christian people should sit on the right hand of our successors, and part on the other; nor that the keys which were entrusted to me should become a device upon a banner which should fight against the baptized;<sup>5</sup> nor that I should be made a figure on a seal to venal and mendacious privileges, whereat I often red-den and flash. Rapacious wolves, in garb of shepherd, are seen from here on high over all the pastures: O defence of God, why dost thou yet lie still! To drink our blood Cahorsines and Gascons are making ready;<sup>6</sup> O good beginning, to what vile end must thou fall! But the high Providence, which with Scipio defended for Rome the glory of the world, will succor speedily, as I conceive. And thou, son, who because of thy mortal weight wilt again return below, open thy mouth, and conceal not that which I conceal not."

Even as our air snows down flakes of frozen vapors, when the horn of the Goat of heaven

5. v. 51. A reference to the war which Boniface VIII. waged against the Colonna family. See *Inferno*, Canto xxvii. 85-111.

6. v. 59. John XXII., Pope from 1316 to 1334, was a native of Cahors; his immediate predecessor, Clement V., 1305-1314, was a Gascon. The passage is interesting as showing that this portion of the poem was in hand during the last years of Dante's life.

is touched by the sun,<sup>7</sup> so I saw the aether become adorned, and flaked upward with the triumphant vapors which had made sojourn there with us.<sup>8</sup> My sight was following their semblances, and followed, till the intermediate space by its vastness took from it the power of passing farther onward. Whereon my Lady, who saw me freed from gazing upward, said to me : "Cast down thy sight, and look how thou hast revolved."

I saw that, since the hour when I had first looked, I had moved through the whole arc which the first climate makes from its middle to its end;<sup>9</sup> so that beyond Cadiz I saw the

7. v. 69. In midwinter, when the sun is in Capricorn.

8. v. 72. As in winter the flakes of snow descend, so now the host of triumphant souls rise upward to the higher heaven, like flakes of flame.

9. v. 81. The old geographers divided the earth into seven zones, called climates, by circles parallel to the equator. The first climate extended twenty degrees to the north of the equator. The sign of the Gemini, in which Dante was revolving in the Heaven of the Fixed Stars, is in the zone of the Heavens corresponding to the first climate, and from his first look downward from the Heavens (see Canto xxii. 133-153) to the present moment, he had, he says, moved over the arc which the first climate describes from its middle to its end.

As each climate extended on the habitable hemisphere for one hundred and eighty degrees, the arc from its middle to its end would be of ninety degrees, a distance supposed to be comprised between Jerusalem and Cadiz, and the time required

mad track of Ulysses, and on the other side almost the shore<sup>10</sup> on which Europa became a sweet burden. And more of the site of this little threshing-floor would have been discovered to me, but the sun was proceeding beneath my feet, a sign and more removed.<sup>11</sup>

My enamoured mind, that ever pays court to my Lady, was more than ever burning to bring back my eyes to her. And if nature or art has made bait in human flesh or in paintings of it, to catch the eyes in order to possess the mind, all united would seem naught compared to the divine pleasure which shone upon me when I turned me to her smiling face. And the virtue which that look vouchsafed to me, tore me from the fair nest of Leda,<sup>12</sup> and impelled me to the swiftest heaven.<sup>13</sup>

for passing through it would be six hours, one fourth of the diurnal revolution of the Heavens.

10. v. 83. On the one side, to the West, Dante saw the ocean, — the mad track of Ulysses ; on the other side almost the coast of Phoenicia, whence Europa was carried off by Jupiter.

11. v. 87. The sun in Aries, being separated by Taurus from Gemini, was some three hours in advance to the West, and therefore the extreme eastern part of the hemisphere of the earth as seen from Gemini was not illuminated by it, so that the coast of Phoenicia and the region beyond it were in the shadow of night.

12. v. 98. From Gemini, the constellation of Castor and Pollux, the twin sons of Leda.

13. v. 99. The *Primum Mobile*, or Crystalline Heaven.

Its parts, most living and lofty, are so uniform that I cannot tell which of them Beatrice chose for a place for me. But she, who saw my desire, began, smiling so glad that God seemed to rejoice in her countenance: "The nature of the universe which holds the centre quiet, and moves all the rest around it, begins here as from its starting-point.<sup>14</sup> And this heaven has no other Where than the Divine Mind, wherein is kindled the love that revolves it, and the virtue which it rains down. Light and love enclose it with one circle, even as it does the others, and of that cincture He who girds it is the sole Intelligence.<sup>15</sup> The motion of this heaven is not marked out by another, but the others are measured by this, just as ten by its half and by its fifth.<sup>16</sup> And how time can

14. v. 108. The properties inherent in the universe, by virtue of which its centre, the earth, is immovable while all the rest of the material creation revolves around it, have their origin here.

15. v. 114. The Angelic Intelligences are the agents who move the lower Heavens, but over the Empyrean, the cincture of light and love by which the First Moving Heaven is enclosed, God himself immediately presides.

16. v. 117. The fixed unit of time is the day, which is established by the revolution of the Crystalline Heaven, the swiftest of all. It determines the slower motions of the Heavens below it, and fixes their proportionate measure. The verse "as ten by the half and the fifth" seems reversed as an illustration.

have its roots in such a flower-pot, and in the others its leaves, may now be manifest to thee.

“O covetousness,<sup>17</sup> which dost so whelm mortals beneath thee, that no one has power to withdraw his eyes from out thy waves! Well does the will blossom in men, but the continual rain converts the true plums into blighted fruit. Faith and innocence are found only in children; then each flies away before the cheeks are covered. One, so long as he lisps, keeps the fasts, who afterward, when his tongue is loosed, devours whatever food under whatever moon; and one, while he lisps, loves his mother and listens to her, who afterward, when his speech is perfect, desires to see her buried. So the skin of the fair daughter of him who brings morning and leaves evening, white in its first aspect, becomes black.<sup>18</sup> Do thou, in order

17. v. 121. The connection of the preceding ideas with this denunciation of covetousness, or selfishness, is not at first apparent. But the transition is not unnatural, from the consideration of the Heaven which pours down Divine influence, to the thought of the engrossment of men in the pursuit of their selfish and transitory ends, in which they are blinded to heavenly and eternal good.

18. v. 138. By ‘the fair daughter of the sun’ Dante seems to mean ‘human nature,’ probably having in mind a saying of Aristotle, which he cites in *De Monarchia*, i. ix., where he says, “The human race is the child of heaven . . . for man and the sun beget man according to [Aristotle,

that thou make no marvel of it, reflect that on earth there is no one who governs; wherefore the human family goes thus astray. But ere January be all un-wintered by that hundredth part which is down there neglected,<sup>19</sup> these supernal circles shall so roar that the storm which has been so long awaited shall turn round the sterns to where the prows are, so that the fleet shall run straight, and true fruit shall come after the flower.”<sup>20</sup>

*Phys.* ii. 2].” The meaning is that the nature of man, fair in infancy, degenerates as life goes on.

19. v. 143. Before January falls in spring, owing to the error in the calendar, by which the year was lengthened by about a day in each century. It is as if the poet said: Before a thousand years shall pass; meaning: Within short while. The error was not corrected till 1582, when the reformed calendar was established by Pope Gregory XIII.

20. v. 148. This last verse is a recurrence to the image in vv. 125, 126.

## CANTO XXVIII

### *The Heavenly Hierarchy*

AFTER she who imparadises my mind had disclosed the truth counter to the present life of wretched mortals ; as one who sees in a mirror the flame of a torch which is lighted behind him, ere he has it in sight or in thought, and turns round to see if the glass tell him the truth, and sees that it accords with it as the note with its measure ;<sup>1</sup> so my memory recollects that I did, looking into the beautiful eyes, wherewith Love made the cord to capture me.<sup>2</sup> And when I turned, and mine were touched by what is apparent in that sphere whenever one gazes fixedly on its circling,<sup>3</sup> I saw a Point

1. v. 9. As the notes of the song with the metre of the verse.

2. v. 12. The eyes of Beatrice reflected, as a mirror, the light which shone from God, and Dante, seeing the reflection, turns to gaze on the Light itself.

3. v. 15. The word translated by 'sphere' is *volume*. Dante uses this word nine times in the *Divine Comedy* ; in six instances it has the meaning of 'volume' in its simple sense ; once, *Paradise*, xxvi. 119, it means 'revolutions,'



which was raying out light so keen that the sight on which it blazes must needs close because of its intense keenness.<sup>4</sup> And whatever star seems smallest from here<sup>5</sup> would seem a moon if placed beside it, as star with star is placed. Perhaps as near as a halo seems to girdle the light which paints it, when the vapor that bears it is most dense, at such distance around the Point a circle of fire was whirling so rapidly that it would have surpassed that motion which most swiftly girds the world; and this was girt around by another, and that by the third, and the third then by the fourth, by the fifth the fourth, and then by the sixth the fifth. Thereon the seventh followed, so widespread now in compass that the messenger of Juno entire<sup>6</sup> would be narrow to contain it. So the eighth and the ninth; and each was moving more slowly, according as it was in number more distant from the unit.<sup>7</sup> And that one had

once, *Paradise*, xxiii. 112, it is equivalent to 'revolving spheres.' Here it signifies the Crystalline Heaven, the *Primum Mobile*, which in its revolution displays the light and love that enclose it.

4. v. 18. This Point is the Glory of God, and the type, in its indivisibility, of the Unity of the Godhead.

5. v. 19. From here on earth.

6. v. 32. The complete circle of Iris, the rainbow.

7. v. 36. These circles of fire are the nine Orders of the Angels.

the clearest flame from which the Pure Spark was least distant ; I believe because it partakes more of Its truth.

My Lady, who saw me deeply suspense in heed, said : " On that Point Heaven and all nature are dependent. Look on that circle which is most conjoined to It, and know that its motion is so swift because of the burning love whereby it is spurred." And I to her : " If the world were disposed in the order which I see in those wheels, that which is set before me would have satisfied me ; but in the world of sense the revolutions may be seen so much the more divine as they are more remote from the centre.<sup>8</sup> Wherefore if my desire is to have end in this marvellous and angelic temple, which has for confine only love and light, I need yet to hear why the example and the exemplar go not in one fashion, because by myself I contemplate this in vain."<sup>9</sup> " If thy fingers are insufficient for such a knot, it is no wonder, so hard has it become through not being tried." Thus my Lady ; then she said : " Take that

8. v. 51. The spheres of the created universe partake more of the divine nature, and move more swiftly, the more distant they are from the earth, their centre ; but these circles of fire in the Empyrean show a reverse condition.

9. v. 57. The angelic circles are the example, or pattern ; the spheres of the material universe are the exemplar, or copy.

which I shall tell thee, if thou wouldest be satisfied, and sharpen thy wit about it. The corporeal circles are wide or narrow according to the more or less of virtue which is diffused through all their parts. Greater goodness must work greater weal; the greater body, if it has its parts equally complete, contains the greater weal.<sup>10</sup> Hence this one, which sweeps along with itself all the rest of the universe, corresponds to the circle which loves most, and knows most.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, if thou draw thy measure round the virtue, not round the appearance of the beings which seem circular to thee, thou wilt see in each heaven a marvellous agreement with its Intelligence, of greater to more and of smaller to less.”<sup>12</sup>

As the hemisphere of the air remains splendid and serene when Boreas blows from that cheek wherewith he is mildest,<sup>13</sup> whereby the

10. v. 69. In this sentence ‘goodness’ corresponds with the “virtue” of the preceding sentence. The greater body, if it be perfect in its parts, possesses greater virtue than the smaller, and consequently works more salutary influence.

11. v. 72. The ninth sphere, the greatest of all, corresponds in its superior virtue with the first and innermost circle of the angelic hierarchy, that of the Seraphim.

12. v. 78. Each sphere of the material heavens in proportion to its size corresponds to each circle of the angelic Intelligences in proportion to the nearness of the latter to God.

13. v. 81. When Boreas blows the north wind more

mist which before troubled it is cleared and dissolved, so that the heaven smiles to us with the beauties of its every region, so I became after my Lady had provided me with her clear answer, and, like a star in heaven, the truth was seen.

And after her words had stopped, not otherwise does molten iron throw out sparks than the circles sparkled. Every scintillation followed its blaze,<sup>14</sup> and they were so many that their number was of more thousands than the doubling of the chess.<sup>15</sup> I heard Hosannah sung from choir to choir to the fixed Point that holds them, and will forever hold them, at the *Ubi*<sup>16</sup> in which they have ever been. And she, who saw the questioning thoughts within my mind,<sup>17</sup> said: "The first circles have shown to

from the east than from the west. The north-east wind was held to clear the sky of clouds.

14. v. 91. The innumerable sparks each kept to its flaming circle, revolving with it.

15. v. 93. The doubling of the chess alludes to the story that the inventor of the game asked, as his reward from the King of Persia, a grain of wheat for the first square of the board, two for the second, four for the third, and so on with successive duplication to the last or sixty-fourth square. The number reached by this process extends to twenty figures.

16. v. 95. The *where*, the appointed place.

17. v. 98. The questioning thoughts of Dante were in regard to the arrangement of the Orders of the Heavenly

thee the Seraphim and the Cherubim. Thus swiftly they follow their own bonds,<sup>18</sup> in order to liken themselves to the Point as most they can, and they can in proportion as they are exalted to see. Those other loves, which go around them, are called Thrones of the divine aspect, because they terminated the first triad.<sup>19</sup> And thou shouldst know that all have delight in proportion as their vision penetrates into the Truth in which every understanding is at rest. Hence may be seen how beatitude is founded on the act which sees, not on that which loves, which follows after. And the merit, to which grace and good-will give birth, is the measure of this seeing; thus is the progress from grade to grade.

Hierarchy, which Beatrice now proceeds to declare to him, following in her account the teaching of the treatise *Concerning the Heavenly Hierarchy*, which was generally ascribed during the Middle Ages to Dionysius the Areopagite (see *Acts* xvii. 34) to whom, it was believed, St. Paul communicated the knowledge concerning heavenly things which he had gained when caught up to Heaven; see 2 Cor. xii. 2-4.

18. v. 100. The course of their respective circles to which they are bound.

19. v. 105. Called Thrones of the divine aspect, because at the Creation God completed the first ternary of the Angelic host with them, constituting them the mirrors whence his judgments shine upon the world below. See Canto ix.

“The next triad, that in like manner bourgeois in this sempiternal spring which the nightly Aries despoils not,<sup>20</sup> perpetually sing Hosannah with three melodies, which sound in the three orders of joy wherewith it is three-fold. In this hierarchy are the three divinities, first Dominations, and then Virtues ; the third order is of Powers. Then, in the two penultimate dances, the Principalities and Archangels circle; the last is wholly of Angelic sports. These orders all gaze upward, and downward so prevail, that toward God all are drawn, and all draw. And Dionysius with such great desire set himself to contemplate these orders, that he named and divided them, as I. But Gregory<sup>21</sup> afterward separated from him ; wherefore, so soon as he opened his eyes in this Heaven, he smiled at himself. And if a mortal declared on earth so much of secret truth, I would not have thee wonder, for he who saw it here on high disclosed it to him, with much else of the truth of these circles.”

20. v. 117. At the autumnal equinox, the time of frosts, Aries — the Ram — is the sign in which the night rises.

21. v. 133. The Pope, St. Gregory, who differs slightly from Dionysius in his arrangement of the Orders of the Heavenly host.

## CANTO XXIX

*Discourse of Beatrice concerning the creation and nature of the Angels. — She reproves the presumption and foolishness of preachers.*

WHEN the two children of Latona, covered by the Ram and by the Scales, both at one moment make a zone of the horizon, as long as from the instant the zenith holds them in balance, till one and the other, changing their hemisphere, are unbalanced from that girdle,<sup>1</sup> so long, with her countenance painted with a smile, was Beatrice silent, looking fixedly upon the Point which had overcome me. Then she began: "I tell, not ask, what thou wishest to hear, for I have seen it where every *where* and every *when* are centred. Not for the gain of good unto Himself, which cannot be, but that His splendor might, in resplendence, say,

I. v. 6. When at the spring equinox, the sun (Apollo) being in the sign of Aries or the Ram, and the moon (Diana) in that of Libra or the Scales, are opposite to each other on the horizon, the one just rising and the other setting, they seem as if held for a moment in a balance which hangs from the zenith.



*I am* ;<sup>2</sup> in His own eternity, outside of time, outside of every other limit, as it pleased Him, the Eternal Love disclosed Himself in new loves. Nor before, as if inert, did He lie ; for neither before nor after<sup>3</sup> did the moving of God upon these waters proceed. Form and matter, conjoined and simple, came into being which had no defect, as three arrows from a three-stringed bow ; and as in glass, in amber, or in crystal a ray shines so that there is no interval between its coming and its being complete, so did the triform effect<sup>4</sup> ray forth from its Lord into its being all at once, without distinction of beginning. Order was concreate and established for the substances ; and those in which pure act was produced were top of the world.<sup>5</sup> Pure potentiality held the lowest part ;<sup>6</sup> in the middle such

2. v. 15. His glory resplendent in the created universe, reflecting Himself, declares : *Subsisto*, " I am."

3. v. 20. See *Genesis* i. 2. In eternity there is no before or after ; time had no existence till the creation, and has relevancy only to created things.

4. v. 28. Pure form, pure matter, and form conjoined with matter.

5. v. 33. The substances in which pure act was produced were the angels, created of pure form. *S. T.* i. 50. 1. They were of pure act because of their pure form, " for in the very instant in which form is acquired the thing begins to operate according to its form." *S. T.* ii<sup>2</sup>. 113. 6.

6. v. 34. Pure potentiality is matter pure and simple, not differentiated by form.

a bond tied up potentiality with act, that it is never unbound.<sup>7</sup> Jerome wrote for you of the Angels, as being created a long tract of centuries before the rest of the world was made; but this truth<sup>8</sup> is written on many pages by the writers of the Holy Spirit, and thou wilt thyself discern it there, if thou watchest well for it; and also the reason sees it somewhat, which would not admit that the motors could be so long without their perfection.<sup>9</sup> Now thou knowest where and when these Loves were created, and how; so that three flames of thy desire are already quenched.

“One would not reach to twenty, in counting, so quickly as a part of the Angels disturbed the lowest of your elements.”<sup>10</sup> The rest re-

7. v. 36. Potency and act are united in the objects of the material creation in which matter and form are conjoined.

8. v. 40. ‘This truth,’ namely (the truth here set forth, contrary to Jerome’s assertion) that the creation of the Angels was contemporaneous with that of the rest of the Universe of which they were the Intelligences. St. Jerome’s opinion is to be found in his comment on the Epistle of Paul to Titus. It is discussed and rejected by St. Thomas Aquinas, *S. T. i. 61. 3.*

9. v. 45. Without scope for their action as movers of the spheres, by which they fulfilled the object of their existence.

10. v. 51. Instantly on their creation a part of the Angels rebelled, and were cast from Heaven to Hell in

mained and began this art which thou beholdest, with such great delight that they never cease from circling. The origin of the fall was the accursed pride of him whom thou hast seen oppress by all the weights of the world. Those whom thou seest here were modest to recognize themselves as from the Goodness which had made them apt for intelligence so great ; " wherefore their vision was exalted by illuminating grace and by their merit, so that they have a full and steadfast will. And I would not that thou doubt, but be certain, that to receive grace is meritorious in proportion as the affection is open to it.

"Henceforth, if my words have been harvested, thou canst contemplate much in regard to this consistory without other assistance. But since on earth it is taught in your schools that the angelic nature is such that it understands, and remembers, and wills, I will speak further, in order that thou mayest see the simple truth, which there below is confused, by the the body of the earth. Dante calls the earth the 'substratum of the elements,' that is, the nethermost of them, lying below the water, the air and the fire. See *Hell*, xxxiv. 122-126.

11. v. 60. The good angels were modest in recognizing that their existence proceeded from God, who had made them capable of understanding the significance of their own creation.

equivocation in such like teaching. These substances, since first they were gladdened by the face of God, have not turned their sight from it, from which nothing is concealed; therefore they have not a vision interrupted by new objects, and therefore do not need to remember by a divided conception.<sup>12</sup> So that down there men dream when not asleep, believing and not believing to speak truth; but in the one is more fault and more shame.<sup>13</sup> Ye below go not along one path in philosophizing; so much do the love of display and the thought of it transport you; and yet this is endured here on high with less indignation than when the divine Scripture is set aside, or when it is perverted. Men think not there how much blood it costs to sow it in the world, or how much he pleases

12. v. 81. The angels, looking always upon God, to whom all things are present, have no need of memory, with what Dante calls its "divided conception." This phrase, "divided conception," is peculiar, and of uncertain meaning. It may perhaps be the equivalent of the modern term 'abstract concept.' The concepts of memory are divided or abstracted from the impression made by the direct vision of the object remembered.

13. v. 84. Many of the doctrines of men on earth are like dreams, because they have no foundation in truth; and while some honestly believe in them, there are others, who, though not believing, are guilty of teaching these doctrines as truth.

who humbly keeps close to it. Every one strives for display, and makes his own inventions, and those are treated of by the preachers, and the Gospel is silent. One says that the moon turned back at the passion of Christ and interposed herself, so that the light of the sun reached not down; and others that the light hid itself of its own accord, so that this eclipse answered for the Spaniards and for the Indians as well as for the Jews. Florence has not so many Lapi and Bindi<sup>14</sup> as fables such as these that are shouted the year long from the pulpits, on every side; so that the poor flocks, who know naught, return from the pasture fed with wind; and not seeing the harm does not excuse them. Christ did not say to his first company: 'Go, and preach idle stories to the world,' but he gave to them the true foundation; and that alone sounded in their mouths, so that to fight for kindling of the faith they made shield and lance of the Gospel. Now men go forth to preach with jests and with buffooneries, and so there be only a good laugh the cowl puffs up, and nothing more is asked; but such a bird is nesting in the tail of the hood, that if the crowd should see it, they would see in what pardoning they are trust-

14. v. 103. Common nicknames in Florence; Lapo is derived from Jacopo, Bindo from Ildebrando.

ing; wherefore <sup>15</sup> such great folly has grown on earth, that, without proof of any testimony, men would flock to every promise. On this the pig of St. Antony fattens, <sup>16</sup> and others also, who are far more pigs, paying with money that has no stamp of coinage.

"But because we have digressed enough, turn back thine eyes now toward the straight path, so that the way be shortened with the time." <sup>17</sup> This nature <sup>18</sup> so exceedingly extends in number, that never was there speech or mortal concept that can go so far. And if thou consider that which is revealed by Daniel thou wilt see that

15. v. 121. By this evil preaching men are rendered so credulous that they put faith in any sort of indulgence.

16. v. 124. St. Antony of Egypt, the Patriarch of Monks, "whose example and instructions," says Alban Butler, "have been the most perfect rule for the monastic life in all succeeding ages," is represented with a hog under his feet, as a symbol of his mastery of sensual temptations. The monks of his Order kept herds of pigs, which were allowed to feed at public charge, and which it was a profanation to steal or kill. Dante gives the name of pigs to his degenerate followers, many of whom were among the worst of the mendicant preachers and pardoners of the Middle Ages, who grew fat on the sale of false indulgences.

17. v. 129. That what remains to say may be proportioned to the short time that there is for stay in this sphere.

18. v. 130. The Angelic nature. "The angels are of a multitude which exceeds every material multitude." *S. T.* i. 50. 3.

in his thousands<sup>19</sup> a determinate number is concealed. The Primal Light that irradiates it all is received in it by as many modes as are the splendors with which It pairs Itself.<sup>20</sup> Wherefore, since the affection follows upon the act that conceives,<sup>21</sup> in this nature the sweetness of love diversely glows and warms. Behold now the height and the breadth of the Eternal Goodness, since it has made for itself so many mirrors on which it is broken, One in itself remaining as before."

19. v. 134. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him."  
*Daniel* vii. 10.

20. v. 130. No two angels are of the same species. Each receives the Primal Light in its own individual measure.

21. v. 139. Since love follows on knowledge through vision.



## CANTO XXX

*Ascent to the Empyrean. — The River of Light. — The celestial Rose. — The seat of Henry VII. — The last words of Beatrice.*

THE sixth hour is glowing perhaps six thousand miles distant from us, and this world now inclines its shadow almost to a level bed, when the mid heaven, deep above us, begins to become such that some one star loses its show so far as to this depth ;<sup>1</sup> and as the brightest handmaid of the sun comes farther on, so the heaven is closed from light to light, even to the most beautiful. Not otherwise the Triumph, that plays forever round the Point which vanquished me, seeming enclosed by that which it encloses, was extinguished little by little to my sight ;<sup>2</sup> wherefore my seeing nothing and my love constrained me

1. v. 6. When it is noon, — the sixth hour, — six thousand miles away from us to the east, it is about daybreak where we are ; the shadow of the earth lies in the plane of vision, and with the growing light the stars one after another become invisible at this depth, that is, to one on earth.

2. v. 13. Losing itself in the light which streams from the Divine point.

to turn with my eyes to Beatrice. If what has been said of her so far as here were all included in a single praise, it would be little to furnish forth this turn. The beauty which I saw transcends measure not only beyond our reach, but surely I believe that its Maker alone can enjoy it all.

By this pass I concede myself vanquished more than ever comic or tragic poet was overcome by crisis of his theme. For as the sun does to the sight which trembles most, even so remembrance of the sweet smile deprives my memory of its very self. From the first day when in this life I saw her face, until this sight, the following with my song has not been cut off for me, but now needs must my pursuit desist from further following her beauty in my verse, as at his utmost every artist.

Such, as I leave her for a greater heralding than that of my trumpet, which is bringing its arduous theme to a close, with act and voice of a leader whose talk is accomplished she began again: "We have issued forth from the greatest body to the Heaven<sup>3</sup> which is pure light: light intellectual full of love, love of true good full of joy, joy which transcends every sweet-

3. v. 39. From the *Primum Mobile*, the Crystalline Heaven, the greatest of the material spheres of the universe, to the Empyrean.

ness. Here thou shalt see the one and the other soldiery of Paradise; and the one in those aspects which thou shalt see at the Last Judgment.”<sup>4</sup>

As a sudden flash which scatters the spirits of the sight so that it deprives the eye of the action of the strongest objects,<sup>5</sup> so did a vivid light shine round about me, leaving me swathed with such a veil of its own effulgence that nothing was visible to me.

“The Love which quieteth this Heaven always welcomes to itself with such a salutation, in order to make the candle fit for its flame.” No sooner had these brief words come within me than I comprehended that I was surmounting above my own power; and I rekindled me with a new vision, such that no light is so pure that my eyes could not have withstood it. And I saw light in form of a river glowing with effulgence, between two banks painted with marvelous spring. From this stream were issuing living sparks, and on every side were setting themselves in the flowers, like rubies which

4. v. 45. The spirits of the redeemed who fought against the temptations of the world, and the good angels who fought against the rebellious; and here the souls in bliss will be seen in their bodily shapes.

5. v. 48. So that the clearest objects produce no effect upon the eye.

gold encompasses. Then, as if inebriated by the odors, they plunged again into the wonderful flood, and as one was entering another was issuing forth.

“The high desire which now inflames and urges thee to have knowledge concerning that which thou seest, pleases me the more the more it swells; but thou must needs drink of this water before so great a thirst in thee be slaked.” Thus the Sun of my eyes said to me; then added: “The stream, and the topazes which enter and issue, and the smiling of the herbage, are shadowy prefaces of their truth;<sup>6</sup> not that these things are difficult in themselves,<sup>7</sup> but there is defect on thy part that thou hast not yet vision so exalted.”

There is no babe who so hastily springs with face toward the milk, if he awake much later than his wont, as I did, to make yet better mirrors of my eyes, stooping to the wave which flows in order that we may be bettered in it. And even as the eaves of my eyelids drank of it, so it seemed to me from its length to have become round. Then as folk who have been

6. v. 78. The stream, the sparks, the flowers are not such in reality as they seem to be; they are but images foreshadowing the truth.

7. v. 79. The things themselves are not difficult to see, but thy eyes cannot yet see them as they actually are.

under masks, who seem other than before, if they divest themselves of the semblance not their own wherein they disappeared, in such wise for me the flowers and the sparks were changed into greater festival, so that I saw both the Courts of Heaven made manifest.

O splendor of God, through which I saw the high triumph of the true kingdom, give to me power to tell how I saw it!

Light is thereabove which makes the Creator visible to that creature which has its peace only in seeing Him; and it spreads in circular shape so far that its circumference would be too large a girdle for the sun. Its whole appearance is made of a ray reflected from the summit of the First Moving Heaven, which from it takes its life and potency. And as a hill mirrors itself in water at its base, as if to see itself adorned, when it is rich with verdure and with flowers, so, above the light, round and round about, on more than a thousand seats, I saw mirrored, as they rose, all that of us have made return on high. And if the lowest row gather within itself so great a light, how vast is the spread of this rose in its outermost leaves! My sight lost not itself in the breadth and in the height, but took in all the quantity and the quality of that joy. There near and far nor add nor take away; for where God governs

without intermediary the natural law is of no relevancy.

Into the yellow of the sempiternal rose, which spreads wide, rises in tiers, and breathes forth odor of praise unto the Sun that makes perpetual spring, Beatrice, like one who is silent and wishes to speak, drew me and said, "Behold, how vast is the convent of the white stoles!<sup>8</sup> See our city, how wide its circuit! See our benches so full that few people are now wanting here.<sup>9</sup> On that great seat, on which thou holdest thine eye because of the crown which already is set above it, ere thou dost sup at this wedding-feast, shall sit the soul (which on earth will be imperial) of the lofty Henry who, to set Italy straight, will come ere she is ready.<sup>10</sup> The blind cupidity which bewitches you has made you like the little child who dies of hunger, and drives away his nurse; and such a one will then be prefect in the divine forum that openly or covertly he will not go with him along one road;"

8. v. 129. "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment." *Revelation* iii. 5.

9. v. 132. "We are now in the last age of the world, and we are awaiting, truly, the consummation of the motion of the Heavens." *Convito*, ii. 15, 115.

10. v. 138. Henry VII., elected Emperor 1308, crowned at Milan 1311, died 1313.

11. v. 144. The Pope, Clement V., for a time ostensibly supported Henry VII. in his Italian expedition, but

but short while thereafter shall he be endured by God in the holy office ; for he shall be thrust down there where Simon Magus is for his deserts, and shall make him of Anagna go lower."

gradually in underhand fashion turned against him. He died in 1314, eight months after the death of Henry. Beatrice here condemns him to the third bolgia of the eighth circle of Hell, whither, as Dante had learned from Pope Nicholas III. (see *Hell*, xix. 79-84) he was to follow Boniface VIII., — him of Anagna, — and push him deeper in the hole where the simoniacal Popes were punished. Boniface is called 'him of Anagna,' because he was born in that town, and was imprisoned there in 1303. The modern form of the name of the town is Anagni.



## CANTO XXXI

*The Rose of Paradise. — St. Bernard. — Prayer to Beatrice. — The glory of the Blessed Virgin.*

IN form then of a pure white rose the holy host was shown to me, which, in His own blood, Christ made His bride. But the other,<sup>1</sup> which, flying, sees and sings the glory of Him who enamours it, and the goodness which made it so great, like a swarm of bees which one while inflower themselves and one while return to where their work acquires savor, were descending into the great flower which is adorned with so many leaves, and thence rising up again to where their love always abides. They had their faces all of living flame, and their wings of gold, and the rest so white that no snow reaches that limit. When they descended into the flower, from bench to bench, they imparted of the peace and of the ardor which they acquired as they fanned their sides. Nor did the interposing of so great a flying plenitude, between what was above and the flower, impede the sight or

1. v. 4. The angelic host.

the splendor ; for the divine light penetrates through the universe, according as it is worthy, so that naught can be an obstacle to it. This secure and joyous realm, thronged with ancient and with modern folk, had its look and love all on one mark.

O Trinal Light, which in a single star, scintillating on their sight, dost so satisfy them, look down here upon our tempest !

If the Barbarians, coming from a region such that every day it is covered by Helicé,<sup>2</sup> revolving with her son of whom she is fond, when they beheld Rome and her lofty work, — what time Lateran rose above mortal things,<sup>3</sup> — were wonder-struck, I, who to the divine from the human, to the eternal from the temporal, had come, and from Florence to a people just and sane, with what amazement must I have been full ! Truly what with it and with the joy I was well pleased not to hear, and to stand mute. And as a pilgrim who is refreshed within the

2. v. 32. The nymph Callisto, or Helicé, bore to Zeus a son, Arcas ; she was metamorphosed by Hera into a bear, and then transferred to Heaven by Jupiter as the constellation of the Great Bear, while her son was changed into the constellation of Arctophylax or the lesser Bear. In the far north these constellations are always high in the heavens.

3. v. 36. When Rome was mistress of the world, and the Lateran the seat of imperial or papal power.

temple of his vow as he looks around, and hopes some day to report how it was, so, journeying through the living light, I carried my eyes over the ranks, now up, now down, and now circling about. I saw faces persuasive to love, beautified by the light of Another and by their own smile, and actions graced with every dignity.

My look had now comprehended the general form of Paradise as a whole, and on no part had my sight as yet been fixed ; and I turned me with rekindled wish to ask my Lady about things as to which my mind was in suspense. One thing I purposed, and another answered me ; I was thinking to see Beatrice, and I saw an old man, robed like the people in glory. His eyes and his cheeks were overspread with benignant joy, his mien kindly such as befits a tender father. And : " Where is she ? " on a sudden said I. Whereon he : " To terminate thy desire, Beatrice urged me from my place, and if thou lookest up to the third circle from the highest rank, thou wilt again see her upon the throne which her merits have allotted to her." Without answering I lifted up my eyes, and saw her as she made for herself a crown reflecting from herself the eternal rays. From that region which thunders highest up no mortal eye is so far distant, in whatsoever sea it lets

itself sink deepest,<sup>4</sup> as there from Beatrice was my sight. But this was naught to me, for her image did not descend to me blurred by aught between.

“O Lady, in whom my hope is strong, and who, for my salvation, didst endure to leave thy footprints in Hell, of all those things which I have seen through thy power and through thy goodness, I recognize the grace and the virtue. Thou hast drawn me from servitude to liberty by all those ways, by all the modes whereby thou hadst the power to do it. Guard thou in me thine own magnificence so that my soul, which thou hast made whole, may, pleasing to thee, be unloosed from the body.” Thus I prayed; and she, so distant, as it seemed, smiled and looked at me; then turned to the eternal fountain.

And the holy old man said: “In order that thou mayst complete perfectly thy journey, for which end prayer and holy love sent me, fly with thine eyes through this garden; for seeing it will prepare thy look to mount further through the divine radiance. And the Queen of Heaven, for whom I burn wholly with love, will grant us every grace, because I am her faithful Bernard.”<sup>5</sup>

4. v. 75. From the highest region of the air to the lowest depth of the sea.

5. v. 102. St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to whom, because

As is he who comes perchance from Croatia to see our Veronica,<sup>6</sup> who by reason of its ancient fame is never sated, but says in thought, so long as it is shown: "My Lord Jesus Christ, true God, was then your semblance like to this?"<sup>7</sup> such was I, gazing on the living charity of him who, in this world, in contemplation, tasted of that peace.

"Son of Grace, this glad existence," began he, "will not be known to thee holding thine eyes only down here at the base, but look on the circles even to the most remote, until thou seest upon her seat the Queen to whom this realm is subject and devoted." I lifted up my eyes; and as at morning the eastern parts of the horizon surpass that where the sun declines, thus, as if going with my eyes from valley to mountain, I saw a part on the extreme verge

of his fervent devotion to her, the Blessed Virgin had deigned to show herself during his life.

6. v. 104. The likeness of the Saviour miraculously impressed upon the kerchief presented to him by a holy woman, on his way to Calvary, wherewith to wipe the sweat and dust from his face, and now religiously preserved at Rome, and shown at St. Peter's, on certain of the chief holydays.

7. v. 108. The pilgrim, who has long heard of the Veronica and desired to see it, cannot sate his desire in gazing at it, and in his thought says: "This, then, Lord Jesus, is your likeness."

vanquishing in light all the rest of the front.<sup>8</sup> And even as there where the pole which Phaëthon guided ill is awaited,<sup>9</sup> the glow is brightest, and on this side and that the light diminishes, so that pacific oriflamme<sup>10</sup> was vivid at the middle, and on each side in equal measure the flame slackened. And at that mid part I saw more than a thousand jubilant Angels with wings outspread, each distinct both in effulgence and in act. I saw there, smiling at their sports and at their songs, a Beauty<sup>11</sup> which was joy in the eyes of all the other saints. And if I had such wealth in speech as in imagining, I should not dare to attempt the least of its delightfulness.

Bernard, when he saw my eyes fixed and intent upon the object of his own burning glow, turned his own with such affection to it, that he made mine more ardent to gaze anew.

8. v. 123. All the rest of the circumference.

9. v. 125. Where the chariot of the sun is about to rise.

10. v. 127. This oriflamme of peace is the part of the rose of Paradise where the Virgin is seated, and its mid point is the Virgin herself. It is called 'the pacific' in contrast with the warlike oriflamme, the banner given by the archangel Gabriel to the ancient kings of France, which bore a flame on a field of gold, whence its name, *aurea flamma*.

11. v. 134. The Blessed Virgin.

## CANTO XXXII

*St. Bernard describes the order of the Rose, and points out many of the Saints. — The children in Paradise. — The angelic festival. — The patricians of the Court of Heaven.*

WITH affection set on his Delight, that contemplator freely assumed the office of a teacher, and began these holy words: "The wound which Mary closed up and anointed, that one who is so beautiful at her feet is she who opened it and who pierced it. Beneath her, in the order which the third seats make, sits Rachel with Beatrice, as thou seest. Sara, Rebecca, Judith, and she<sup>1</sup> who was great-grandmother of the singer who, through sorrow for his sin, said *Miserere mei*,<sup>2</sup> thou mayst see thus from rank to rank in gradation downward, as with the name of each I go downward through the rose from leaf to leaf. And from the seventh row downwards, even as down to it, Hebrew women follow in succession, dividing all the tresses of the flower; because these are the wall by which the

1. v. 10. Ruth.

2. v. 12. "Have mercy upon me." Psalm li. 1.



sacred stairs are separated according to the look which faith turned on Christ. On this side, where the flower is mature with all its leaves, are seated those who believed in Christ about to come. On the other side, where the semi-circles are broken by empty spaces, are those who turned their faces on Christ already come.<sup>3</sup> And as on this side the glorious seat of the Lady of Heaven, and the other seats below it, make so great a division, thus, opposite, does the seat of the great John, who, ever holy, endured the desert and martyrdom, and then Hell for two years ;<sup>4</sup> and beneath him Francis and Benedict and Augustine and others are allotted thus to divide, far down as here from circle to

3. v. 27. The circle of the Rose is divided vertically in two equal parts. In the upper tiers of the one half, far as midway down the flower, the saints of the Old Dispensation, who believed in Christ about to come, are seated. These benches are full. On the corresponding benches of the other half, on which are some empty spaces, sit the redeemed of the New Dispensation who have believed in Christ already come. On one side the line of division between the semi-circles is made by the Hebrew women from the Virgin Mary downwards ; on the opposite side the line is made by St. John Baptist and other saints who had rendered special service to Christ and his Church. The lower tiers of seats are occupied by innocent children elect to bliss.

4. v. 33. The two years from the death of John to the death of Christ and his descent to Hell, to draw from the *limbus patrum* the souls predestined to salvation.

circle. Now behold the high divine foresight; for one and the other aspect of the faith will fill this garden equally. And know that downwards from the row which midway cleaves<sup>5</sup> the two divisions, they are seated for no merit of their own, but for that of others, under certain conditions; for all these are spirits absolved ere they had true power of choice. Well canst thou perceive it by their faces, and also by their childish voices, if thou lookest well upon them and if thou listenest to them. Now thou art perplexed, and in perplexity art silent; but I will loose for thee the strong bond in which thy subtle thoughts fetter thee.<sup>6</sup> Within the amplitude of this realm a casual point can have no place,<sup>7</sup> any more than sadness, or thirst, or hunger; for whatever thou seest is established by eternal law, so that here the ring answers exactly to the finger. And therefore this folk, hastened to true life, is not *sine causa* more and less excellent here among themselves.<sup>8</sup> The King,

5. v. 40. Those who are seated below the row which cleaves horizontally the two halves are children too young to have merit of their own.

6. v. 51. The perplexity was, How can there be difference of merit in the innocent, assigning them to different seats in Paradise?

7. v. 53. No least thing can here be matter of chance.

8. v. 60. It is not "without cause" that these children enjoy different measures of bliss.

through whom this realm reposes in such great love and in such great delight that no will dares for more, creating all the minds in His own glad aspect, endows with grace diversely according to His pleasure ; and here let the fact suffice.<sup>9</sup> And this is expressly and clearly noted for you in the Holy Scripture in the case of those twins who, within their mother, had their anger stirred.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, according to the color of the hair of such grace,<sup>11</sup> the highest light must needs befittingly crown them. Without, then, merit from their own ways, they are placed in different grades, differing only in their primary keenness of vision.<sup>12</sup> In the early cen-

9. v. 66. Without attempt to account for it or to seek the "wherefore" of the will of God.

10. v. 69. Jacob and Esau. See *Genesis* xxv. 22. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth ; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger." *Romans* ix. 11-12.

11. v. 71. This strange metaphor has been apparently suggested by the reference to Jacob and Esau, who differed in color and skin. See *Genesis* xxv. 25. The argument is, that God imparts grace to one or another according to his pleasure ; and as the hair of children differs in color without apparent reason, so the endowment of grace differs in measure for each, and in proportion to this diversity, does the light of Heaven crown them.

12. v. 75. In their innate capacity to see God, which is in proportion to the grace vouchsafed to them before birth.

turies, indeed, the faith of parents alone sufficed, together with innocence, to secure salvation; after the first ages were complete, it was needful for males, through circumcision, to acquire power for their innocent wings. But after the time of grace had come, without perfect baptism in Christ, such innocence was held back there below.<sup>13</sup>

“Look now upon the face which most resembles Christ, for only its brightness can prepare thee to see Christ.”

I saw raining down on her such great joy, borne in the holy minds created to fly across through that height, that whatsoever I had seen before held me not suspended in such great wonder, nor showed to me such likeness unto God. And that Love which had before descended to her,<sup>14</sup> in front of her spread wide his wings, singing “*Ave, Maria, gratia plena.*” The blessed Court responded to the divine song from all sides, so that every countenance became thereby the more serene.

“O holy Father, who for me endurest to be here below, leaving the sweet place in which thou sittest by eternal allotment, who is that Angel who with such joy looks into the eyes of

13. v. 84. In the limbo of children.

14. v. 94. In the heaven of the Fixed Stars; Canto xxiii. 94.

our Queen, so enamoured that he seems of fire?" Thus did I again recur to the teaching of him who was deriving beauty from Mary, as the morning star from the sun. And he to me, "Confidence and grace as much as there can be in Angel and in soul, are all in him, and we would have it so, for he it is <sup>15</sup> who bore the palm down to Mary, when the Son of God willed to load Himself with our burden.

"But come now with thine eyes, as I shall proceed speaking, and note the great patricians of this most just and pious empire. Those two who sit there above, most happy through being nearest to the Empress, are, as it were, two roots of this rose. He who on the left is next her is the Father because of whose audacious tasting the human race tastes so much bitterness. On the right see that ancient Father of Holy Church, to whom Christ entrusted the keys of this lovely flower. And he <sup>16</sup> who saw before his death all the grievous times of the fair bride, who was won with the spear and with the nails, sits at his side; and by the other rests that leader, under whom the ingrate, fickle and stubborn people lived on manna. Opposite

15. v. 112. The angel Gabriel; Luke i. 26.

16. v. 127. St. John, the Evangelist, who in his long life witnessed and suffered from the persecutions which the early Church had to endure.

Peter see Anna sitting, so content to gaze upon her daughter, that she moves not her eyes as she sings Hosannah; and opposite the eldest father of a family sits Lucia,<sup>17</sup> who moved thy Lady, when thou didst bend thy brow to rush downward.<sup>18</sup>

“But because the time flies which holds thee slumbering,<sup>19</sup> here will we make a stop, like a good tailor who makes the gown according as he has cloth, and we will direct our eyes to the First Love, so that, looking towards Him, thou mayst penetrate so far as is possible through His effulgence. But, lest perchance, moving thy wings, thou go backward, believing

17. v. 137. The introduction of Lucia here is not less enigmatic than the choice of her for the functions which she performs in the other parts of the poems, *Hell*, ii. 97-108; *Purgatory*, ix. 55-63.

18. v. 138. When in despair of reaching the height thou wert speeding down into the low place. See *Hell*, i. 61.

19. v. 139. Dante has told us at the beginning of his ascent through the Heavens that he knows not whether he was there in body or only in spirit (Cantos i. 73-75; ii. 37-39). The hint of slumber let fall thus *obiter* in this verse affords, perhaps, the clue to his real conception. The body was lying in apparent physical sleep, while the soul, far from the body, was actually visiting the spiritual world. The journey through Paradise is the type of the deliverance of the soul from captivity to the law of sin, and from the body of this death.

to advance, it is needful that grace be obtained by prayer; grace from her who has the power to aid thee; and do thou follow me with thy affection so that thy heart depart not from my speech."

And he began this holy prayer.



## CANTO XXXIII

*Prayer to the Virgin. — The Beatific Vision. — The Ultimate Salvation.*

“VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thine own Son, humble and exalted more than any creature, fixed term of the eternal counsel, thou art she who didst so ennoble human nature that its own Maker disdained not to become its creature. Within thy womb was rekindled the Love through whose warmth this flower has thus blossomed in the eternal peace. Here thou art to us the noonday torch of charity, and below, among mortals, thou art the living fount of hope. Lady, thou art so great, and so availest, that whoso would have grace, and has not recourse to thee, would have his desire fly without wings. Thy benignity not only succors him who asks, but oftentimes freely foreruns the asking. In thee mercy, in thee pity, in thee magnificence, in thee whatever of goodness is in any creature, are united. Now doth this man, who, from the lowest abyss of the universe, far even as here, has seen one after one the spiritual lives, supplicate thee of grace,

for power such that he may be able with his eyes to uplift himself higher toward the Ultimate Salvation. And I, who never for my own vision burned more than I do for his, proffer to thee all my prayers, and pray that they be not scant, that with thy prayers thou wouldst dispel for him every cloud of his mortality, so that the Supreme Pleasure may be displayed to him. Further I pray thee, Queen, who canst whatso thou wilt, that, after so great a vision, thou wouldst preserve his affections sound. May thy guardianship vanquish human impulses. Behold Beatrice with all the Blessed for my prayers clasp their hands to thee.”<sup>1</sup>

The eyes beloved and venerated by God, fixed on the speaker, showed to us how pleasing unto her are devout prayers. Then to the Eternal Light were they directed, to which it may not be believed that eye so clear of any creature enters in.

And I, who to the end of all desires was approaching, even as I ought, ended within myself the ardor of my longing.<sup>2</sup> Bernard made a sign to me, and smiled, that I should look upward; but I was already, of myself, such as

1. v. 39. In the *Second Nun's Tale* Chaucer has rendered, with great beauty, the larger part of this prayer.

2. v. 48. The ardor of longing ceased in the consummation and enjoyment of desire.

he wished ; for my sight, becoming pure, was entering more and more through the radiance of the lofty Light which in Itself is true.

Thenceforward my vision was greater than our speech, which yields to such a sight, and the memory yields to such excess.<sup>3</sup>

As is he who dreaming sees, and after the dream the passion remains imprinted, and the rest returns not to the mind, such am I ; for my vision almost wholly departs, while the sweetness that was born of it yet distils within my heart. Thus the snow is by the sun unsealed ; thus by the wind, on the light leaves, was lost the saying of the Sibyl.

O Supreme Light, that so high upliftest Thyself from mortal conceptions, re-lend to my mind a little of what Thou didst appear, and make my tongue so powerful that it may be able to leave one single spark of Thy glory for the folk to come ; for, by returning somewhat to my memory and by sounding a little in these verses, more of Thy victory shall be conceived.

I think that by the keenness of the living ray

3. v. 57.

“ Vague words ! but ah, how hard to frame  
In matter-moulded forms of speech,  
Or ev’n for intellect to reach  
Thro’ memory that which I became.”

*In Memoriam*, XCV.

which I endured, I should have been dazed if my eyes had been averted from it; and I remember that on this account I was the more hardy to sustain it till I conjoined my gaze with the Infinite Goodness.

O abundant Grace, whereby I presumed to fix my look through the Eternal Light till that there I consummated the seeing!

I saw that in its depth is enclosed, bound up with love in one volume, that which is dispersed in leaves through the universe; substance and accidents and their modes, fused together, as it were, in such wise, that that of which I speak is one simple Light. The universal form of this knot<sup>4</sup> I believe that I saw, because, in saying this, I feel that I rejoice more spaciouly. One single moment only is greater oblivion for me than five and twenty centuries to the emprise which made Neptune wonder at the shadow of Argo.<sup>5</sup>

4. v. 91. This union of substance and accident and their modes; the unity of creation in the Creator.

5. v. 96. The larger joy felt in the mention of what he saw, is proof that it was seen, but the vision so surpassed human faculties, though their power was exalted by grace, that they could not retain it in its completeness, but lost more of it in a single moment, than any loss which long lapse of time may work for past events.

Neptune wondered at the shadow of Argo because it was the first vessel that sailed the sea.

Thus my mind, wholly rapt, was gazing fixed, motionless, and intent, and ever with gazing grew enkindled. In that Light one becomes such that it is impossible he should ever consent to turn himself from it for other sight; because the Good which is the object of the will is all collected in it, and outside of it that is defective which is perfect there.

Now will my speech fall more short, even in respect to that which I remember, than that of an infant who still bathes his tongue at the breast. Not because more than one simple semblance was in the Living Light wherein I was gazing, which is always such as it was before; but through my sight, which was growing strong in me as I looked, one sole appearance, as I myself changed, was altering itself to me.

Within the profound and clear subsistence of the lofty Light appeared to me three circles of three colors and of one dimension; and one seemed reflected by the other, as Iris by Iris,<sup>6</sup> and the third seemed fire which from the one and from the other is equally breathed forth.

O how inadequate is speech, and how feeble toward my conception! and this toward what I saw is such that it suffices not to call it little.

O Light Eternal, that sole abidest in Thyself, sole understandest Thyself, and, by Thy-

6. v. 118. As one arch of the rainbow by the other.

self understood and understanding, lovest and smilest on Thyself! That circle, which appeared in Thee generated as a reflected light, being awhile surveyed by my eyes, seemed to me depicted with our effigy within itself, of its own very color; wherefore my sight was wholly set upon it. As is the geometer who wholly applies himself to measure the circle, and finds not by thinking that principle of which he is in need, such was I at that new sight. I wished to see how the image was conformed to the circle, and how it has its place therein; but my own wings were not for this, had it not been that my mind was smitten by a flash in which its wish came.

To the high fantasy here power failed; but now my desire and my will were revolved, like a wheel which is moved evenly, by the Love which moves the sun and the other stars.<sup>7</sup>

7. v. 145. By the grace of God Dante's desire was fulfilled in this vision, and his beatitude perfected in the conformity of his will with the Divine.





# INDEX TO THE DIVINE COMEDY

[The references are to Canto and Verse]

- Abati, Bocca degli. Hell, **xxxii.** 106.  
 Abbagliato. Hell, **xxix.** 132.  
 Abbey of San Benedetto. Hell, **xvi.** 100.  
 Abel. Hell, **iv.** 56.  
 Abraham. Hell, **iv.** 58.  
 Absalom. Hell, **xxviii.** 137.  
 Abydos. Purg. **xxviii.** 74.  
 Accorso, Francis of. Hell, **xv.** 110.  
 Achan. Purg. **xx.** 109.  
 Acheron. Hell, **iii.** 78; **xiv.** 116; Purg. **ii.** 105.  
 Achilles. Hell, **v.** 65; **xii.** 71; **xxvi.** 62; **xxxii.** 5; Purg. **ix.** 34; **xxi.** 92.  
 Achitophel. Hell, **xxviii.** 137.  
 Acone. Par. **xvi.** 65.  
 Acquacheta. Hell, **xvi.** 97-99.  
 Acquasparta. Par. **xii.** 124.  
 Acre. Hell, **xxvii.** 89.  
 Adam. Hell, **iii.** 115; **iv.** 55; Purg. **ix.** 10; **xi.** 44; **xxix.** 86; **xxxii.** 37; **xxxiii.** 62; Par. **vii.** 26; **xiii.** 37, 82; **xxvi.** 83, 91, 92; **xxxii.** 120, 122, 136.  
 Adam of Brescia. Hell, **xxx.** 61, 104.  
 Adige. Hell, **xii.** 5; Purg. **xvi.** 115; Par. **ix.** 44.  
 Adimari, family. Par. **xvi.** 115.  
 Adrian V. Purg. **xix.** 79.  
 Aegidius. Par. **xi.** 83.  
 Aeneas. Hell, **ii.** 32; **iv.** 122; **xxvi.** 93; Purg. **xviii.** 137; Par. **vi.** 3; **xv.** 27.  
 Aeneid. Purg. **xxi.** 97.  
 Aeolus. Purg. **xxviii.** 21.  
 Aesop. Hell, **xxiii.** 4.  
 Africanus, Scipio. Purg. **xxix.** 116.  
 Agamemnon. Par. **v.** 69.  
 Agapetus. Par. **vi.** 16.  
 Agathon. Purg. **xxii.** 107.  
 Aglauros. Purg. **xiv.** 139.  
 Agnello Brunelleschi. Hell, **xxv.** 68.  
 Aguglione. Par. **xvi.** 56.  
 Ahasuerus, King. Purg. **xvii.** 28.  
 Alagia. Purg. **xix.** 142.  
 Alardo. Hell, **xxviii.** 18.  
 Alba Longa. Par. **vi.** 37.  
 Alberichi, family. Par. **xvi.** 89.  
 Alberigo, Jovial Friar. Hell, **xxxiii.** 118.  
 Albert of Austria. Purg. **vi.** 97; Par. **xix.** 115.  
 Albert of Siena. Hell, **xxix.** 109.  
 Alberti, Alessandro and Napoleone degli. Hell, **xxxii.** 21.  
 Alberto degli Alberti. Hell, **xxxii.** 57.  
 Alberto della Scala. Purg. **xviii.** 121.  
 Albertus Magnus. Par. **x.** 98.  
 Alboino della Scala. Par. **xvii.** 71.  
 Alchemists. Hell, **xxix.**  
 Alcides. Par. **ix.** 101.  
 Alcmaeon. Purg. **xii.** 50; Par. **iv.** 103.  
 Aldobrandeschi, Guglielmo. Purg. **xi.** 59.  
 Aldobrandi, Tegghiaio. Hell, **vi.** 79; **xvi.** 41.  
 Alecto. Hell, **ix.** 47.  
 Alessandria. Purg. **vii.** 135.  
 Alessandro, Count of Romena. Hell, **xxx.** 77.  
 Alessandro degli Alberti. Hell, **xxxii.** 21.  
 Alessio Interminei. Hell, **xviii.** 122.  
 Alexander, Tyrant of Pherae. Hell, **xii.** 107.  
 Alexander the Great. Hell, **xii.** 107; **xiv.** 31.  
 Alfonso of Aragon. Purg. **vii.** 116.  
 Ali, disciple of Mahomet. Hell, **xxviii.** 32.  
 Alchينو, demon. Hell, **xxi.** 118; **xxii.** 112.  
 Alighieri, family. Par. **xv.** 92.  
 Alps. Hell, **xx.** 62; Purg. **xvii.** 1; **xxxiii.** 111.  
 Altaforte. Hell, **xxix.** 29.  
 Alvernia, Mount. Par. **xi.** 106, 107.  
 Amata. Purg. **xvii.** 35.  
 Amidei, family. Par. **xvi.** 136.  
 Amphiaraus. Hell, **xx.** 34.  
 Amphion. Hell, **xxxii.** 11.  
 Amphisbaena, serpent. Hell, **xxiv.** 87.  
 Amyclas. Par. **xi.** 68.  
 Anagna. Purg. **xx.** 86; Par. **xxx.** 148.  
 Ananias. Par. **xxvi.** 12.  
 Anastagi, family. Purg. **xiv.** 107.  
 Anastasius, Pope. Hell, **xi.** 8.  
 Anaxagoras. Hell, **iv.** 137.

- Anchises. Hell, i. 74; Purg. xviii. 137; Par. xv. 25; xix. 132.  
 Angels. Par. xxviii. 126; xxxi. 4-18.  
 Angels, rebel. Par. xxix. 38.  
 Angiolello da Cagnano. Hell, xxviii. 77.  
 Anna, St., mother of the Virgin Mary. Par. xxxii. 133.  
 Annas. Hell, xxxii. 121.  
 Anselm, St. Par. xii. 137.  
 Anselm, grandson of Ugolino. Hell, xxxiii. 50.  
 Antaeus. Hell, xxxi. 100, 113, 139.  
 Antandros. Par. vi. 67.  
 Antenora. Hell, xxxii. 88.  
 Antenori (Paduans). Purg. v. 75.  
 Antigone. Purg. xxii. 110.  
 Antiochus Epiphanes. Hell, xix. 87.  
 Antiphon. Purg. xxii. 106.  
 Antony, St. Par. xxix. 124.  
 Apennines. Hell, xvi. 96; xx. 65; xxvii. 30; Purg. v. 96; xiv. 32, 92; xxx. 86; Par. xxi. 106.  
 Apocalypse. Hell, xix. 106-108; Purg. xxix. 105, 143-148; Par. xxv. 94-96.  
 Apollo. Purg. xx. 132; Par. i. 13; ii. 8.  
 Apostles. Purg. xxii. 78.  
 Apulia. Hell, xxviii. 9; Purg. v. 69; vii. 126; Par. viii. 61-63.  
 Apulians. Hell, xxviii. 17.  
 Aquarius, sign of the Zodiac. Hell, xxiv. 2.  
 Aquilo. Purg. iv. 60; xxxii. 99.  
 Aquinas, St. Thomas. Par. x. 99; xii. 110, 144.  
 Arabs. Par. vi. 49.  
 Arachne. Hell, xvii. 18; Purg. xii. 43.  
 Aragon. Purg. iii. 116.  
 Aragonese. Par. xix. 131.  
 Arbia. Hell, x. 86.  
 Arca, family. Par. xvi. 92.  
 Archangels. Par. xxviii. 125.  
 Archiano. Purg. v. 95, 125.  
 Ardinghi, family. Par. xvi. 93.  
 Arethusa. Hell, xxv. 97.  
 Aretine, Benincasa. Purg. vi. 13.  
 Aretine, Griffolino. Hell, xxix. 109-120; xxx. 31.  
 Aretines. Hell, xxii. 5; Purg. xiv. 46-47.  
 Arezzo. Hell, xxix. 109.  
 Argenti, Filippo. Hell, viii. 61.  
 Argia. Purg. xxii. 110.  
 Argo. Par. xxxiii. 96.  
 Argolic people. Hell, xxviii. 84.  
 Argonauts. Par. ii. 16.  
 Argus. Purg. xxix. 95; xxxii. 64-66.  
 Ariadne. Hell, xii. 20; Par. xiii. 14.  
 Aries, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. xxxii. 53; Par. i. 40; xxviii. 117.  
 Aristotle. Hell, iv. 131; Purg. iii. 43; Par. viii. 120.  
 Arius. Par. xiii. 127.  
 Ark, the holy. Purg. x. 56; Par. xx. 39.  
 Arles. Hell, ix. 112.  
 Arnaut, Daniel. Purg. xxvi. 142, 170.  
 Arno. Hell, xiii. 146; xv. 113; xxxii. 95; xxx. 65; xxxiii. 83; Purg. v. 126; xiv. 17, 24, 26, 51, 60; Par. xi. 106.  
 Arrigo Mainardi. Purg. xiv. 97.  
 Arrigucci family. Par. xvi. 108.  
 Arsenal of Venice. Hell, xxi. 7.  
 Arthur, King. Hell, xxxii. 62.  
 Aruns. Hell, xx. 46.  
 Ascesi, or Assisi. Par. xi. 53.  
 Asciano. Hell, xxix. 131.  
 Asdente. Hell, xx. 118.  
 Asopus. Purg. xviii. 91.  
 Assyrians. Purg. xii. 59.  
 Athamas. Hell, xxx. 4.  
 Athens. Hell, xii. 17; Purg. vi. 139; xv. 97; Par. xvii. 46.  
 Atropos. Hell, xxxiii. 126.  
 Attila. Hell, xii. 134; xiii. 149.  
 Augustin, one of the first followers of St. Francis. Par. xii. 130.  
 Augustine, St. Par. x. 120; xxxii. 35.  
 Augustus Caesar. Hell, i. 71; Purg. xxix. 116; Par. vi. 73.  
 Augustus (Frederick II.). Hell, xiii. 68.  
 Aulis. Hell, xx. 111.  
 Aurora. Purg. ii. 8; ix. 1.  
 Ausonia. Par. viii. 61.  
 Auster. Purg. xxxii. 99.  
 Austria. Hell, xxxii. 26.  
 Avaricious, the. Hell, vii.; Purg. xix.; xx.; xxi.  
 Aventine, Mount. Hell, xxv. 26.  
 Averroes. Hell, iv. 144.  
 Avicenna. Hell, iv. 143.  
 Azzo degli Ubaldini. Purg. xiv. 105.  
 Azzolino, or Ezzellino. Hell, xii. 110; Par. ix. 29.  
 B and Ice, Bice (Beatrice). Par. vii. 14.  
 Babylon. Par. xxxiii. 135.  
 Bacchantes. Purg. xviii. 92.  
 Bacchiglione. Hell, xv. 113; Par. ix. 47.  
 Bacchus. Hell, xx. 59; Purg. xviii. 93; Par. xiii. 25.  
 Bagnacaval. Purg. xiv. 115.  
 Bagnoregio. Par. xii. 128.  
 Baldo d' Aguglione. Par. xvi. 56.  
 Baptist, St. John the. Hell, xiii. 143; xxx. 74; Purg. xxii. 152; Par. xvi. 25, 47; xviii. 134, 135; xxxii. 31.  
 Baptistery of Florence. Par. xxv. 134.  
 Barbagia of Sardinia. Purg. xxiii. 94; 96.  
 Barbarians, Northern. Par. xxxi. 31.

- Barbariccia, demon. Hell, **xxi.** 120; **xxii.** 29, 59, 145.  
 Barbarossa, Frederick I. Purg. **xviii.** 119.  
 Bari. Par. **viii.** 62.  
 Barrators (peculators). Hell, **xxi.**  
 Bartolomeo della Scala. Par. **xvii.** 71.  
 Barucci family. Par. **xvi.** 104.  
 Bears, constellations of the. Purg. **iv.** 65; Par. **ii.** 9; **xiii.** 7.  
 Beatrice. Hell, **ii.** 70, 103; **x.** 131; **xii.** 88; **xv.** 90; Purg. **i.** 53; **vi.** 46; **xv.** 77; **xviii.** 48, 73; **xxiii.** 128; **xxvii.** 36, 53, 136; **xxx.** 73; **xxxi.** 80, 107, 114, 133; **xxxii.** 36, 85, 106; **xxxiii.** 4, 124; Par. **i.** 46, 64; **ii.** 22; **iii.** 127; **iv.** 13, 39; **v.** 16, 85, 122; **vii.** 16; **ix.** 16; **x.** 37, 52, 60; **xi.** 11; **xiv.** 8, 79; **xv.** 70; **xvi.** 13; **xvii.** 5, 30; **xviii.** 17, 53; **xxi.** 63; **xxii.** 125; **xxxiii.** 19, 34, 76; **xxiv.** 10, 22, 55; **xxv.** 28, 137; **xxvi.** 77; **xxvii.** 34, 102; **xxix.** 8; **xxx.** 14, 128; **xxxi.** 59, 66, 76; **xxxii.** 9; **xxxiii.** 38.  
 Beatrice, Queen. Purg. **vii.** 128.  
 Beccheria, Abbot of. Hell, **xxxii.** 119.  
 Bede, the Venerable. Par. **x.** 131.  
 Beelzebub. Hell, **xxxiv.** 127.  
 Belacqua. Purg. **iv.** 123.  
 Belisarius. Par. **vi.** 25.  
 Bellincion Bertì. Par. **xv.** 112; **xvi.** 99.  
 Bello, Geri del. Hell, **xxix.** 27.  
 Belus, King of Tyre. Par. **ix.** 97.  
 Benaco. Hell, **xx.** 63, 74, 77.  
 Benedetto, San, Abbey of. Hell, **xvi.** 100.  
 Benedict, St. Par. **xxii.** 28, 58; **xxxii.** 35.  
 Benevento. Purg. **iii.** 128.  
 Benincasa of Arezzo. Purg. **vi.** 13.  
 Berenger, Raymond. Par. **vi.** 134.  
 Bergamasque. Hell, **xx.** 71.  
 Bernard, Friar. Par. **xi.** 79.  
 Bernard, St., Abbot. Par. **xxxi.** 102, 139; **xxxii.** 1, 107.  
 Bernardin di Fosco. Purg. **xiv.** 101.  
 Bernardone, Pietro. Par. **xi.** 89.  
 Bertha, Dame. Par. **xiii.** 139.  
 Bertì, Bellincion. Par. **xv.** 112; **xvi.** 99.  
 Bertran de Born. Hell, **xxviii.** 134.  
 Bianchi, White Party. Hell, **vi.** 65.  
 Bice (Beatrice). Hell, **ii.** 53, 76, 103.  
 Billi or Pigli, family. Par. **xvi.** 3.  
 Bindi, abbreviation of Ildebrando. Par. **xxix.** 103.  
 Bisenzio. Hell, **xxxii.** 56.  
 Bismantova. Purg. **iv.** 26.  
 Bocca degli Abati. Hell, **xxxii.** 106.  
 Boëthius, Severinus. Par. **x.** 124-129.  
 Bohemia. Purg. **vii.** 99; Par. **xix.** 125.  
 Bologna. Hell, **xxiii.** 142; Purg. **xiv.** 100.  
 Bolognese. Hell, **xxiii.** 103.  
 Bolsena. Purg. **xxiv.** 24.  
 Bonagiunta Urbiciani, of Lucca. Purg. **xxiv.** 19, 20.  
 Bonatti, Guido. Hell, **xx.** 118.  
 Bonaventura, St. Par. **xii.** 127.  
 Boniface, Archbishop of Ravenna. Purg. **xxiv.** 29.  
 Boniface VIII. Hell, **xix.** 53; **xxvii.** 70, 85; Purg. **xx.** 87; **xxxii.** 149; Par. **ix.** 142; **xii.** 90; **xvii.** 49-51; **xxvii.** 22-24; **xxx.** 148.  
 Boniface of Signa. Par. **xvi.** 56.  
 Bonturo de' Dati. Hell, **xxi.** 41.  
 Boreas. Par. **xxviii.** 81.  
 Borgo of Florence. Par. **xvi.** 134.  
 Born, Bertran de. Hell, **xxviii.** 134.  
 Borsiere, Guglielmo. Hell, **xvi.** 70.  
 Bostichi, family. Par. **xvi.** 93.  
 Brabant, Lady of. Purg. **vi.** 23.  
 Branca d' Oria. Hell, **xxxiii.** 137, 140.  
 Branda, fountain. Hell, **xxx.** 78.  
 Brennus. Par. **vi.** 44.  
 Brenta. Hell, **xv.** 7; Par. **ix.** 27.  
 Brescia. Hell, **xx.** 68.  
 Brescians. Hell, **xx.** 71.  
 Brettinoro. Purg. **xiv.** 112.  
 Briareus. Hell, **xxxi.** 98; Purg. **xii.** 28.  
 Bridge of St. Angelo. Hell, **xviii.** 29.  
 Brigata. Hell, **xxxiii.** 89.  
 Brissus. Par. **xiii.** 125.  
 Brosse, Pierre de la. Purg. **vi.** 22.  
 Bruges. Hell, **xv.** 4; Purg. **xx.** 46.  
 Brundisium. Purg. **iii.** 27.  
 Brunelleschi, Agnello. Hell, **xxv.** 68.  
 Brunetto Latini. Hell, **xv.** 30, 32, 101.  
 Brutus, enemy of Tarquin. Hell, **iv.** 127.  
 Brutus and Cassius. Par. **vi.** 74.  
 Buggia. Par. **ix.** 92.  
 Buiamonte, Giovanni. Hell, **xvii.** 72.  
 Bulicame, hot spring of Viterbo. Hell, **xiv.** 79.  
 Buonconte di Montefeltro. Purg. **v.** 88.  
 Buondelmonte. Par. **xvi.** 140.  
 Buondelmonti, family. Par. **xvi.** 66.  
 Buoso da Duera. Hell, **xxxii.** 106, 114, 116.  
 Buoso degli Abati. Hell, **xxv.** 140.  
 Buoso Donati. Hell, **xxx.** 44.  
 Caccia d' Asciano. Hell, **xxix.** 131.  
 Cacciaguida. Par. **xv.** 20, 22, 31, 52, 85, 89, 135; **xvi.** 16, 17, 18, 22, 30; **xviii.** 2, 25, 50, 51.  
 Caccianimico, Venedico. Hell, **xviii.** 50.  
 Cacus. Hell, **xxv.** 25.  
 Cadiz. Par. **xxvii.** 82.  
 Cadmus. Hell, **xxv.** 97.  
 Caecilius. Purg. **xxii.** 98.

- Caesar. Hell, xiii. 65; Purg. vi. 92, 114; Par. i. 92; vi. 114; xvi. 59.  
 Caesar, Julius. Hell, i. 70; iv. 123; xxviii. 98; Purg. xviii. 131; xxvi. 77; Par. vi. 57.  
 Caesar, Tiberius. Par. vi. 10.  
 Cagnano, Angiolello da. Hell, xxviii. 77.  
 Cagnano. Par. ix. 49.  
 Cagnazzo, demon. Hell, xxi. 119.  
 Cahors. Hell, xi. 50; Par. xxvii. 58.  
 Cajaphas. Hell, xxiii. 111, 115.  
 Cain. Purg. xiv. 133.  
 Cain and his thorns (man in the moon). Hell, xx. 126; Par. ii. 51.  
 Cajna. Hell, v. 107; xxxii. 58.  
 Calaroga. Par. xii. 52.  
 Calboli family. Purg. xiv. 89.  
 Calcabrina, demon. Hell, xxi. 118; xxii. 133.  
 Calchas. Hell, xx. 110.  
 Calfucci, family. Par. xvi. 106.  
 Calixtus I. Par. xxvii. 44.  
 Calliope. Purg. i. 9.  
 Callisto (Helice). Purg. xxv. 131.  
 Camaldoli. Purg. v. 96.  
 Camicion de' Pazzi. Hell, xxxii. 68.  
 Camilla. Hell, i. 107; iv. 124.  
 Camino, Gherardo da. Purg. xvi. 124, 133, 138.  
 Camino, Riccardo da. Par. ix. 49-51.  
 Camonica, Val. Hell, xi. 65.  
 Campagnatico. Purg. xi. 66.  
 Campaldino. Purg. v. 92.  
 Campi. Par. xvi. 50.  
 Canavese. Purg. vii. 136.  
 Cancellieri, family. Hell, xxxii. 63.  
 Cancer, sign of the Zodiac. Par. xxv. 101.  
 Can Grande della Scala. Par. xvii. 76, 93.  
 Capaneus. Hell, xiv. 63.  
 Capet, Hugh. Purg. xx. 43.  
 Capocchio. Hell, xxix. 136; xxx. 28.  
 Caponsacco. Par. xvi. 121.  
 Cappelletti, family. Purg. vi. 106.  
 Caprara. Hell, xxxii. 82.  
 Capricorn, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. ii. 57; Par. xxvii. 69.  
 Caprona. Hell, xxi. 95.  
 Cardinal, the (Ottaviano degli Ubaldini). Hell, x. 120.  
 Carisenda. Hell, xxxi. 136.  
 Carlino de' Pazzi. Hell, xxxii. 69.  
 Carpigna, Guido di. Purg. xiv. 98.  
 Carrarese. Hell, xx. 48.  
 Casale. Par. xii. 124.  
 Casalodi, family. Hell, xx. 95.  
 Casella. Purg. ii. 91.  
 Casentino. Hell, xxx. 65; Purg. v. 94; xiv. 43.  
 Cassero, Guido del. Hell, xxviii. 77.  
 Cassero, Jacopo del. Purg. v. 64-84.  
 Cassino, Monte. Par. xxii. 37.  
 Cassius, murderer of Caesar. Hell, xxxiv. 67.  
 Cassius and Brutus. Par. vi. 74.  
 Castel, Guido da. Purg. xvi. 125.  
 Castile. Par. xii. 49-54.  
 Castle of St. Angelo in Rome. Hell, xviii. 29.  
 Castor and Pollux. Purg. iv. 61; Par. xxvii. 98.  
 Castrocaro. Purg. xiv. 116.  
 Catalan de' Malavolti. Hell, xxiii. 104, 114.  
 Catalonia. Par. viii. 77.  
 Catellini, family. Par. xvi. 88.  
 Cato of Utica. Hell, xiv. 15; Purg. i. 31, 73, 133; ii. 119.  
 Catona. Par. viii. 62.  
 Catria. Par. xxi. 109.  
 Cattolica. Hell, xxviii. 80.  
 Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti. Hell, x. 53, 110.  
 Cavalcanti, Guercio. Hell, xxv. 35, 83, 151.  
 Cavalcanti, Guido. Hell, x. 63.  
 Cecina. Hell, xiii. 9.  
 Celestine V. Hell, iii. 59; xxvii. 105.  
 Cenchi, serpents. Hell, xxiv. 87.  
 Centaur. Hell, xii. 104, 115, 129; Purg. xxiv. 121-123.  
 Ceperano. Hell, xxviii. 16.  
 Cephas. Par. xxi. 127.  
 Cerberus. Hell, vi. 13, 22, 32; ix. 98.  
 Cerchi, family. Par. xvi. 65.  
 Ceres. Purg. xxviii. 49-51.  
 Certaldo. Par. xvi. 50.  
 Cervia. Hell, xxvii. 42.  
 Cesena. Hell, xxvii. 52.  
 Ceuta (Setta). Hell, xxvi. 111.  
 Chaos. Hell, xii. 43.  
 Charity, St. John examines Dante on. Par. xxvi.  
 Charlemagne, Emperor. Hell, xxxi. 17; Par. vi. 94; xviii. 43.  
 Charles of Anjou. Purg. vii. 113; xi. 137.  
 Charles of Valois (Senzaterra, Lackland). Purg. xx. 71.  
 Charles Martel. Par. viii. 31; ix. 1.  
 Charles Robert of Hungary. Par. viii. 72.  
 Charles II. of Apulia. Purg. vii. 127; xx. 79; Par. vi. 106; xix. 127; xx. 63.  
 Charles's Wain, the Great Bear. Hell, xi. 114; Purg. i. 30; Par. xiii. 7.  
 Charon. Hell, iii. 94, 109, 128.  
 Charybdis. Hell, vii. 22.  
 Chastity, examples of. Purg. xxv. 133.  
 Chelydri, serpents. Hell, xxiv. 86.  
 Cherubim. Par. xxviii. 99.  
 Chiana. Par. xiii. 23.  
 Chiarentana. Hell, xv. 9.

- Chiascio, river. Par. xi. 43; 44.  
 Chiassi. Purg. xxviii. 20.  
 Chiaveri. Purg. xix. 120.  
 Chiron. Hell, xii. 65, 71, 77, 97;  
   Purg. ix. 37.  
 Chiusi. Par. xvi. 75.  
 Christ. Hell, xxxiv. 115; Purg. xv. 89;  
   xx. 87; xxi. 8; xxxiii. 74; xxvi. 129;  
   xxxii. 81, 102; xxxiii. 63; Par. vi. 14;  
   ix. 120; xi. 72, 102, 107; xii. 37, 71;  
   xiv. 104; xvii. 33, 51; xix. 72, 104;  
   xx. 47; xxxiii. 20, 72, 107, 136; xxv.  
   45, 72, 113; xxxi. 98, 109; xxxi. 3,  
   107; xxxii. 20, 24, 27, 83, 85, 87, 125;  
   xxxiii. 110.  
 Christians. Purg. x. 121; Par. v. 73;  
   xix. 109; xx. 104.  
 Chrysostom, St. Par. xii. 137.  
 Church of Rome. Hell, xix. 57; Purg.  
   xvi. 127; Par. xvii. 72.  
 Ciaccio. Hell, vi. 52.  
 Ciampolo, or Giampolo. Hell, xxii. 32,  
   44, 121.  
 Cianfa de' Donati. Hell, xxv. 43.  
 Cianghella. Par. xv. 128.  
 Cieldauro. Par. x. 128.  
 Cimabue. Purg. xi. 94.  
 Cincinnatus, Quinctius. Par. vi. 46;  
   xv. 129.  
 Circe. Hell, xxvi. 91; Purg. xiv. 42.  
 Ciriatto, demon. Hell, xxi. 122;  
   xxii. 55.  
 Clara, St., of Assisi. Par. iii. 98.  
 Clemence, Queen. Par. ix. 1.  
 Clement IV. Purg. iii. 125.  
 Clement V. Hell, xix. 83; Par. xvii.  
   82; xxx. 197.  
 Cleopatra. Hell, v. 63; Par. vi. 76.  
 Cletus. Par. xxvii. 41.  
 Clio. Purg. xxii. 58.  
 Clotho. Purg. xxi. 27.  
 Clymene. Par. xvii. 1.  
 Cock, arms of Gallura. Purg. viii. 81.  
 Cocytus. Hell, xiv. 119; xxxi. 123,  
   173; xxxiii. 156; xxxiv. 52.  
 Colchians. Hell, xviii. 87.  
 Colchos. Par. ii. 16.  
 Colle. Purg. xiii. 115.  
 Cologne. Hell, xxiii. 63.  
 Colonnese, family. Hell, xxvii. 86.  
 Comedy. Dante thus names his poem.  
   Hell, xvi. 128.  
 Conio. Purg. xiv. 116.  
 Conrad or Corrado Malaspina. Purg.  
   viii. 65; 118.  
 Conrad or Corrado III., Emperor.  
   Par. xv. 139.  
 Conrad or Corrado da Palazzo. Purg.  
   xvi. 124.  
 Conradin. Purg. xx. 68.  
 Conscience. Hell, xxviii. 115.  
 Constance, Queen of Aragon. Purg.  
   iii. 115, 143; vii. 129.  
 Constance, wife of Henry VI. of Ger-  
   many. Purg. iii. 113; Par. iii. 118;  
   iv. 98.  
 Constantine the Great. Hell, xix. 115;  
   xxvii. 94; Purg. xxxii. 124; Par. vi. 1;  
   xx. 55.  
 Constantinople. Par. vi. 5.  
 Cornelia. Hell, iv. 128; Par. xv. 129.  
 Corneto. Hell, xii. 137.  
 Corsica. Purg. xviii. 81.  
 Corso de' Donati. Purg. xxiv. 82.  
 Corus, northwest wind. Hell, xi. 114.  
 Cosenza. Purg. iii. 124.  
 Counsellors, evil. Hell, xxvi.  
 Counterfeiters of money, speech, or  
   person. Hell, xxx.  
 Crassus. Purg. xx. 116.  
 Crete. Hell, xii. 12; xiv. 95.  
 Creusa. Par. ix. 98.  
 Croatia. Par. xxxi. 103.  
 Crusaders and Soldiers of the Faith.  
   Par. xiv.  
 Cunizza, sister of Ezzelino III. Par.  
   ix. 32.  
 Cupid. Par. viii. 7.  
 Curiatii, the. Par. vi. 39.  
 Curio. Hell, xxviii. 102.  
 Cyclops. Hell, xiv. 55.  
 Cypriote, the (Venus). Par. viii. 2.  
 Cyprus. Hell, xxviii. 82; Par. xix.  
   146.  
 Cyrrha. Par. i. 36.  
 Cyrus. Purg. xii. 56.  
 Cytherea (the planet Venus). Purg.  
   xxvii. 95.  
 Daedalus. Hell, xvii. 111; xxix. 116;  
   Par. viii. 125.  
 Damian, Peter. Par. xxi. 121.  
 Damietta. Hell, xiv. 104.  
 Daniel, Prophet. Purg. xxii. 146; Par.  
   iv. 13; xxix. 134.  
 Daniel, Arnaut. Purg. xxvi. 116, 142.  
 Dante. Purg. xxx. 55.  
 Danube. Hell, xxxii. 26; Par. viii. 65.  
 David, King. Hell, iv. 58; xxviii. 138;  
   Purg. x. 63; Par. xx. 38; xxv. 72;  
   xxxii. 11, 204.  
 Decii, the. Par. vi. 47.  
 Decretals, Book of. Par. ix. 134.  
 Deidamia. Hell, xxvi. 62; Purg. xxii.  
   114.  
 Deiphile. Purg. xxii. 10.  
 Dejanira. Hell, xii. 68.  
 Delia (the Moon). Purg. xx. 132;  
   xxix. 78.  
 Delos. Purg. xx. 130.  
 Democritus. Hell, iv. 136.  
 Demophoon. Par. ix. 101.  
 Denis, King of Portugal. Par. xix.  
   139.  
 Diana. Purg. xx. 132; xxv. 131; Par.  
   xxxiii. 26, 149.

- Diana, subterranean river. Purg. xiii. 153.  
 Dido. Hell, v. 85; Par. viii. 9.  
 Diligence, examples of. Purg. xviii. 88.  
 Diogenes. Hell, iv. 137.  
 Diomed. Hell, xxvi. 56.  
 Dione, Venus. Par. viii. 7; Planet Venus, xxii. 144.  
 Dionysius the Areopagite. Par. x. 115; xxviii. 130.  
 Dionysius, Tyrant. Hell, xii. 107.  
 Dioscorides. Hell, iv. 140.  
 Dis, city of. Hell, viii. 68; xi. 104; xii. 39; xxxiv. 20.  
 Dolcino, Fra. Hell, xxviii. 55.  
 Dominations, order of angels. Par. xxviii. 122.  
 Dominic, St. Par. x. 95; xi. 35, 118; xii. 55, 70, 77.  
 Dominicans. Par. xi. 124.  
 Domitian, Emperor. Purg. xxii. 83.  
 Don, river. Hell, xxxii. 27.  
 Donati, Buoso. Hell, xxx. 44.  
 Donati, Corso. Purg. xxiv. 82.  
 Donati, Forese. Purg. xxiii. 48, 76; xxiv. 74.  
 Donati, Ubertain. Par. xvi. 119.  
 Donatus. Par. xii. 137.  
 Douai. Purg. xx. 46.  
 Draghignazzo, demon. Hell, xxi. 121; xxii. 73.  
 Dragon. Purg. xxxii. 131.  
 Duca, Guido del. Purg. xiv. 81; xv. 44.  
 Duera, Buoso da. Hell, xxxii. 106.  
 Duke of Athens, Theseus. Hell, ix. 54; xii. 17; Purg. xxiv. 123.  
 Dyrrachium. Par. vi. 65.  
 Ebro. Purg. xxvii. 3; Par. ix. 89.  
 Eclogue IV. of Virgil. Purg. xxii. 57.  
 Egidius. Par. xi. 83.  
 Egina. Hell, xxix. 59.  
 Egypt. Par. xxv. 55.  
 Elbe. Purg. vii. 99.  
 El and Eli, names of God. Par. xxvi. 134.  
 Electra. Hell, iv. 121.  
 Elias. Purg. xxxii. 80.  
 Elijah, Prophet. Hell, xxvi. 35.  
 Eliseo, ancestor of Dante. Par. xv. 136.  
 Elisha, Prophet. Hell, xxvi. 35.  
 Elsa. Purg. xxxiii. 67.  
 Elysium. Par. xv. 27.  
 Ema. Par. xvi. 143.  
 Empedocles. Hell, iv. 138.  
 Empyrean. Par. xxx.  
 England. Purg. vii. 131.  
 Envious, the. Purg. xiii.; xiv.  
 Ephialtes. Hell, xxxi. 94, 108.  
 Epicurus. Hell, x. 14.  
 Equator. Purg. iv. 80.  
 Equinoctial sunrise. Par. i. 38.  
 Erichtho. Hell, ix. 23.  
 Erinnyes, the Furies. Hell, ix. 45.  
 Eriphyle. Purg. xii. 50.  
 Erisichthon. Purg. xxiii. 26.  
 Esau. Par. viii. 130; xxxii. 68.  
 Essence, the Divine. Par. xxxiii. 16.  
 Este, or Esti, Azzone da. Purg. v. 77.  
 Este, or Esti, Obizzo da. Hell, xii. 111.  
 Esther. Purg. xvii. 29.  
 Eteocles and Polynices. Hell, xxvi. 54; Purg. xxii. 56.  
 Ethiop. Purg. xxvi. 21; Par. xix. 109.  
 Ethiopia. Hell, xxiv. 89.  
 Euclid. Hell, iv. 142.  
 Eunoë. Purg. xxviii. 131; xxxiii. 127.  
 Euphrates. Purg. xxxiii. 112.  
 Euripides. Purg. xxii. 106.  
 Europa, daughter of Agenor. Par. xxvii. 84.  
 Europe. Purg. viii. 123; Par. xii. 48.  
 Eurus, southeast wind. Par. viii. 69.  
 Euryalus. Hell, i. 108.  
 Eurypylus. Hell, xx. 112.  
 Evangelists, the four. Purg. xxix. 92.  
 Eve. Purg. viii. 99; xii. 71; xxiv. 116; xxix. 24; xxx. 52; xxxii. 32; Par. xiii. 37.  
 Evil counsellors. Hell, xxvi.  
 Ezekiel, Prophet. Purg. xxxix. 100.  
 Ezzelino, or Azzolino. Hell, xii. 110; Par. ix. 29.  
 Fabbro. Purg. xiv. 100.  
 Fabii, the. Par. vi. 47.  
 Fabricius. Purg. xx. 25.  
 Faenza. Hell, xxvii. 49; xxxii. 123; Purg. xiv. 101.  
 Faith, St. Peter examines Dante on. Par. xxiv.  
 Falterona. Purg. xiv. 17.  
 Famagosta. Par. xix. 146.  
 Fame, seekers of, by noble enterprises. Par. v.  
 Fano. Hell, xxviii. 76; Purg. v. 71.  
 Fantolin, Ugolin de'. Purg. xiv. 121.  
 Farfarello, demon. Hell, xxi. 123; xxii. 94.  
 Farinata degli Uberti. Hell, vi. 79; x. 32.  
 Federigo Novello. Purg. vi. 17.  
 Federigo Tignoso. Purg. xiv. 106.  
 Felix Guzman. Par. xii. 79.  
 Feltro. Hell, i. 105; Par. ix. 52.  
 Ferrara. Par. xv. 137.  
 Fieschi, Counts of Lavagna. Purg. xix. 102.  
 Fiesole. Hell, xv. 62, 96; Par. vi. 53; xv. 126; xvi. 122.  
 Fifanti, family. Par. xvi. 104.  
 Figghine. Par. xvi. 50.



- Filippeschi and Monaldi, families. | Galahaut. Hell, v. 137.  
   Purg. vi. 107. | Galaxy. Par. xiv. 99.  
 Filippi, family. Par. xvi. 89. | Galen. Hell, iv. 143.  
 Fishes, sign of the Zodiac. Hell, xi. | Galicia. Par. xxv. 18.  
   113; Purg. i. 21; xxxii. 54. | Galigaio. Par. xvi. 101.  
 Flatterers. Hell, xviii. | Galli, family. Par. xvi. 105.  
 Flemings. Hell, xv. 4. | Gallura. Hell, xxii. 82; Purg. viii. 81.  
 Fleur-de-lys, of France. Purg. xx. 86; | Calluzzo. Par. xvi. 53.  
   Par. vi. 100. | Ganellon, or Gano, of Magonza. Hell,  
 Florence. Hell, x. 92; xiii. 143; xvi. | xxxii. 122.  
   75; xxxiii. 95; xxiv. 144; xxvi. 1; | Ganges. Purg. ii. 5; xxvii. 4; Par.  
   xxxii. 120; Purg. vi. 127; xii. 102; | xi. 51.  
   xiv. 64; xx. 75; xxiv. 79; Par. vi. | Ganymede. Purg. ix. 23.  
   53; ix. 127; xv. 97; xvi. 25, 84, 111, | Garda, lake of. Hell, xx. 65.  
   146, 149; xvii. 48; xxv. 5; xxix. 103; | Gardingo, district of Florence. Hell,  
   xxx1. 39. | xxxii. 108.  
 Florentines. Hell, xv. 61; xvi. 73; | Gascons. Par. xxvii. 58.  
   xvii. 70; Purg. xiv. 1; Par. xvi. 86. | Gascony. Purg. xx. 66.  
 Florentine women. Purg. xxxii. 101. | Gate of Purgatory. Purg. ix. 51.  
 Focaccia de' Cancellieri. Hell, xxxii. 63. | Gaville. Hell, xxv. 151.  
 Focara. Hell, xxviii. 89. | Gemini, sign of the Zodiac. Par. xxii.  
 Folco of Marseilles. Par. ix. 94. | 152.  
 Forese Donati. Purg. xxxiii. 48, 76; | Genesis. Hell, xi. 107.  
   xxiv. 74. | Genoeese. Hell, xxxiii. 151; Par. ix.  
 Forl. Hell, xvi. 99; xxvii. 43. | 90.  
 Fortune. Hell, vii. 62; xv. 46. | Gentucca. Purg. xxiv. 37.  
 Fortune, the greater. Purg. xix. 4. | Geomancers. Purg. xix. 4.  
 Fosco, Bernardin di. Purg. xiv. 101. | Gerault de Berneil. Purg. xxvi. 120.  
 France. Hell, xix. 87; Purg. vii. 109; | Geri del Bello. Hell, xxix. 27.  
   xx. 51, 71; Par. xv. 120. | Germans. Hell, xvii. 21.  
 Francesca da Rimini. Hell, v. 116. | Germany. Hell, xx. 62.  
 Francesco of Accorso. Hell, xv. 110. | Geryon. Hell, xvii. 97, 133; xviii. 20;  
 Francis of Assisi, St. Hell, xxvii. 112; | Purg. xxvii. 23.  
   Par. xi. 50, 74, 118; xxii. 90; xxxii. | Ghent. Purg. xx. 46.  
   35. | Gherardo da Camino. Purg. xvi. 124,  
 Franciscans. Par. xii. 115. | 133.  
 Franco of Bologna. Purg. xi. 83. | Ghibellines and Guelfs. Par. vi. 103.  
 Fraud, sin of. Hell, xi. 25. | Ghin di Tacco. Purg. vi. 14.  
 Frederick I., Barbarossa. Purg. xviii. | Ghisola, sister of Caccianimico. Hell,  
   119. | xviii. 55.  
 Frederick II., Emperor. Hell, x. 119; | Gianfigliuzzi, family. Hell, xvii. 59.  
   xiii. 59; xxxii. 66; Purg. xvi. 117; | Gianni Schicchi. Hell, xxx. 32.  
   Par. iii. 120. | Gianni del Soldanieri. Hell, xxxii. 121.  
 Frederick, King of Sicily. Purg. vii. | Giano della Bella. Par. xvi. 132.  
   119; Par. xix. 131; xx. 63. | Giants. Hell, xxxi. 31; Purg. xii. 33.  
 Free will. Purg. xvi. 71; xviii. 74. | Gideon. Purg. xxiv. 125.  
 French people. Hell, xxvii. 44; xxix. | Gilboa, Mount. Purg. xii. 41.  
   123; xxxii. 115; Par. viii. 75. | Giotto. Purg. xi. 95.  
 Friars, Jovial (Fratì Gaudenti), of | Giuda. Par. xvi. 123.  
   Santa Maria. Hell, xxiii. 103. | Giuochi, family. Par. xvi. 104.  
 Frieslanders. Hell, xxxi. 64. | Glaucus. Par. i. 68.  
 Fucci, Vanni. Hell, xxiv. 125. | Gluttons. Hell, vi.; Purg. xxii.;  
 Fulcieri da Calboli. Purg. xiv. 58. | xxxiii.; xxiv.  
 Furies. Hell, ix. 38. | Godfrey of Bouillon. Par. xviii. 47.  
 Gabriel, Archangel. Purg. x. 34; Par. | Gomita, Brother. Hell, xxii. 81.  
   iv. 47; ix. 138; xiv. 36; xxxii. 94; | Gomorrah. Purg. xxvi. 40.  
   xxxii. 94, 103. | Gorgon, head of Medusa. Hell, ix. 56.  
 Gaddo, son of Ugolino. Hell, xxxdii. | Gorgona. Hell, xxxiii. 82.  
   68. | Governo, now Governolo. Hell, xx.  
 Gaeta. Hell, xxvi. 92; Par. viii. 62. | 76.  
 Gaia, daughter of Gherardo. Purg. | Graffiaccane, demon. Hell, xxi. 122;  
   xvi. 140. | xxii. 34.  
 Gratian. Par. x. 104.



- Greci, family. Par. xvi. 89.  
 Greece. Hell, xx. 108.  
 Greeks. Hell, xxvi. 75; Purg. ix. 39; xxii. 88; Par. v. 69.  
 Gregory the Great, St. Purg. x. 75; Par. xx. 108; xxviii. 133.  
 Griffolino d' Arezzo. Hell, xxix. 109.  
 Griffon. Purg. xxix. 108; xxxii. 26.  
 Gualandi, family. Hell, xxxiii. 32.  
 Gualdo. Par. xi. 48.  
 Gualdrada. Hell, xvi. 37.  
 Gualterotti, family. Par. xvi. 133.  
 Gubbio. Purg. xi. 80.  
 Guelfs and Ghibellines. Par. vi. 107.  
 Guenever. Par. xvi. 15.  
 Guglielmo Aldobrandesco. Purg. xi. 59.  
 Guglielmo Borsiere. Hell, xvi. 70.  
 Guidi, Counts. Par. xvi. 64.  
 Guido Bonatti. Hell, xx. 118.  
 Guido di Carpigna. Purg. xiv. 98.  
 Guido del Cassero. Hell, xxviii. 77.  
 Guido da Castel. Purg. xvi. 125.  
 Guido Cavalcanti. Hell, x. 63, 111; Purg. xi. 97.  
 Guido del Duca. Purg. xiv. 81.  
 Guido Guinicelli. Purg. xi. 97; xxvi. 92.  
 Guido da Montefeltro. Hell, xxvii. 4.  
 Guido da Prata. Purg. xiv. 104.  
 Guido Ravignani. Par. xvi. 98.  
 Guido, Count of Romena. Hell, xxx. 77.  
 Guidoguerra. Hell, xvi. 38.  
 Guiscard, Robert. Hell, xxviii. 14; Par. xviii. 48.  
 Guittone d' Arezzo. Purg. xxiv. 56; xxvi. 124.  
 Guy of Montfort. Hell, xii. 118.  
 Halo. Par. xxviii. 23.  
 Haman. Purg. xvii. 26.  
 Hannibal. Hell, xxxi. 117; Par. vi. 50.  
 Harpies. Hell, xiii. 10, 101.  
 Hebrews. Purg. iv. 83; xviii. 134; xxiv. 124; Par. v. 49; xxxii. 132.  
 Hebrew women. Par. xxxii. 17.  
 Hector. Hell, iv. 122; Par. vi. 68.  
 Hecuba. Hell, xxx. 16.  
 Helen. Hell, v. 64.  
 Helice. (Callisto) Purg. xxv. 131.  
 (Great Bear) Par. xxxi. 32.  
 Helicon. Purg. xxix. 40.  
 Heliodorus. Purg. xx. 113.  
 Helios (the sun), God. Par. xiv. 96.  
 Hellespont. Purg. xxviii. 71.  
 Henry III. of England. Purg. vii. 131.  
 Henry VI., Emperor. Par. iii. 119.  
 Henry VII., Emperor. Par. xvii. 82; xxx. 137.  
 Henry, Prince, of England, the Young King. Hell, xxviii. 135.  
 Heraclitus. Hell, iv. 138.  
 Hercules. Hell, xxv. 32; xxvi. 108; xxxi. 132.  
 Heretics. Hell, x.  
 Hermitage of Camaldoli. Purg. v. 96.  
 Hezekiah, King. Par. xx. 49.  
 Hierarchies, Angelic. Par. xxviii.  
 Hippocrates. Hell, iv. 143.  
 Hippolytus, son of Theseus. Par. xvii. 46.  
 Holofernes. Purg. xii. 59.  
 Holy Land. Par. ix. 125; xv. 144.  
 Homer. Hell, iv. 88; Purg. xxii. 101.  
 Homicides. Hell, xii.  
 Honorius III., Pope. Par. xi. 98.  
 Hope, St. James examines Dante on. Par. xxv.  
 Horace. Hell, iv. 89.  
 Horatii, the. Par. vi. 39.  
 Hugh Capet. Purg. xx. 43.  
 Hugh of St. Victor. Par. xii. 133.  
 Humility, examples of. Purg. xii.  
 Hungary. Par. viii. 65; xix. 184.  
 Hyperion. Par. xxii. 142.  
 Hypocrites. Hell, xxiii.  
 Hypsipyle. Hell, xviii. 92; Purg. xxii. 95; xxvi. 112, 168.  
 Iarbas. Purg. xxxi. 72.  
 Icarus. Hell, xvii. 109; Par. viii. 126.  
 Ida, Mount. Hell, xiv. 98.  
 Ilerda. Purg. xviii. 101.  
 Ilion. Hell, i. 75; Purg. xii. 62.  
 Illuminato. Par. xii. 130.  
 Importuni, family. Par. xvi. 133.  
 India. Hell, xiv. 32.  
 Indians. Purg. xxxii. 41; Par. xxix. 101.  
 Indulgences. Par. xxix. 123.  
 Indus. Par. xix. 71.  
 Infangato. Par. xvi. 123.  
 Innocent III., Pope. Par. xi. 92.  
 Ino, wife of Athamas. Hell, xxx. 5.  
 Interminei, Alessio. Hell, xviii. 122.  
 Iole. Par. ix. 102.  
 Iphigenia. Par. v. 70.  
 Irascible, the. Hell, vii. 8; viii; Purg. xv. 36.  
 Iris. Purg. xxi. 50; xxix. 78; Par. xii. 12; xxviii. 32; xxxiii. 118.  
 Isaac, patriarch. Hell, iv. 59.  
 Isaiah, prophet. Par. xxv. 91.  
 Isère. Par. vi. 59.  
 Isidore, St. Par. x. 131.  
 Ismene, daughter of Oedipus. Purg. xxii. 111.  
 Ismenus. Purg. xviii. 91.  
 Israel (Jacob), patriarch. Hell, iv. 59.  
 Italy. Hell, i. 106; ix. 114; xx. 61; xxvii. 27; xxxiii. 80; Purg. vi. 76; 105, 124; vii. 95; xiii. 96; xx. 67; xxx. 86; Par. xxi. 106; xxx. 137.

- Jacob, patriarch. Par. viii. 131; xxii. 71, 144; xxxii. 68.  
 Jacopo del Cassero. Purg. v. 64.  
 Jacopo da Lentino, the Notary. Purg. xxiv. 56.  
 Jacopo Rusticucci. Hell, vi. 80; xvi. 44.  
 Jacopo of Sant' Andrea. Hell, xiii. 133.  
 Jaculi (serpents). Hell, xxiv. 86.  
 James, St. (son of Alpheus), apostle. Purg. xxix. 142; xxxii. 76.  
 James, St. (son of Zebedee), apostle. Par. xxv. 17, 77.  
 James, King of Aragon. Purg. vii. 119; Par. xix. 137.  
 James, King of the Balearic Isles. Par. xix. 137.  
 Janus. Par. vi. 81.  
 Jason, leader of the Argonauts. Hell, xviii. 86; Par. ii. 18.  
 Jehoshaphat. Hell, x. 11.  
 Jephthah. Par. v. 66.  
 Jericho. Par. ix. 124.  
 Jerome, St. Par. xxix. 37.  
 Jerusalem. Hell, xxxiv. 114 Purg. ii. 3; xxxiii. 29; Par. xix. 127; xxv. 56.  
 Jews. Hell, xxiii. 123; xxvii. 87; Par. vii. 47; xxix. 102.  
 Joachim, Abbot. Par. xii. 140.  
 Joan of Montefeltro. Purg. v. 89.  
 Joan, Visconti. Purg. viii. 71.  
 Joan, mother of St. Dominic. Par. xii. 80.  
 Jocasta, Queen of Thebes. Purg. xxii. 56.  
 John the Baptist, St. Hell, xiii. 143; xxx. 74; Purg. xxii. 152; Par. xvi. 25, 47; xviii. 134; xxxii. 31.  
 John Chrysostom, St. Par. xii. 137.  
 John, St., evangelist. Hell, xix. 106; Purg. xxix. 92, 105, 143; xxxii. 76; Par. xxiv. 126; xxv. 112; xxxii. 127.  
 John, St., church in Florence. Hell, xix. 17. See *Baptistery*.  
 John XXII., Pope. Par. xxvii. 58.  
 Jordan. Purg. xviii. 135; Par. xxii. 94.  
 Joseph, Patriarch. Hell, xxx. 97.  
 Joseph, St., husband of Virgin Mary. Purg. xv. 91.  
 Joshua. Purg. xx. 111; Par. ix. 125; xviii. 38.  
 Jove. Hell, xiv. 52; xxxi. 45, 92; Purg. xii. 32; xxix. 120; xxxii. 112; Par. iv. 62.  
 Jove, Supreme (appellation of the Christian God). Purg. vi. 118.  
 Juba. Par. vi. 170.  
 Jubilee of the year 1300. Hell, xviii. 29; Purg. ii. 98.  
 Judas Iscariot. Hell, ix. 27; xix. 96; xxxiv. 62; Purg. xx. 74; xxi. 84.  
 Judas Maccabeus. Par. xviii. 40.  
 Judecca. Hell, xxxiv. 117.  
 Judith. Par. xxxii. 10.  
 Julia, daughter of Caesar. Hell, iv. 128.  
 Julius Caesar. Hell, i. 70; iv. 123; xxviii. 98; Purg. xviii. 101; xxvi. 77; Par. vi. 57; xl. 69.  
 Juno. Hell, xxx. 1; Par. xii. 12; xxviii. 32.  
 Jupiter, planet. Par. xviii. 70, 95, 115; xxi. 145; xxvii. 14.  
 Justinian, Emperor. Purg. vi. 89; Par. vi. 10; vii. 1.  
 Juvenal. Purg. xxii. 14.  
 Lacedaemon (Sparta). Purg. vi. 139.  
 Lachesis. Purg. xxi. 25; xxv. 79.  
 Lamberti, family. Par. xvi. 110.  
 Lamone. Hell, xxvii. 49.  
 Lancelot. Hell, v. 128.  
 Lanciotto, Malatesta. Hell, v. 107.  
 Lanfranchi, family. Hell, xxxiii. 32.  
 Langia, fountain of. Purg. xxii. 112.  
 Lano. Hell, xiii. 120.  
 Lapo, abbreviation of Jacopo, plural Lapi. Par. xxix. 102.  
 Lapo Salterello. Par. xv. 128.  
 Lasca, the celestial. Purg. xxxii. 54.  
 Lateran church. Hell, xxvii. 86.  
 Latian, for Italian. Hell, xxvii. 33; xxix. 88; Purg. xi. 58.  
 Latian land, Italy. Hell, xxvii. 27; xxviii. 71.  
 Latini, Brunetto. Hell, xv. 30; 101.  
 Latinus, King. Hell, iv. 125.  
 Latona. Purg. xx. 131; Par. x. 67; xxii. 139; xxix. i.  
 Lavagna. Purg. xix. 101.  
 Lavinia. Hell, iv. 126; Purg. xvii. 37; Par. vi. 3.  
 Lawrence, St. Par. iv. 83.  
 Leah. Purg. xxvii. 101.  
 Leander. Purg. xxviii. 73.  
 Learchus and Melicertes. Hell, xxx. 10.  
 Lebanon. Purg. xxx. 11.  
 Leda. Par. xxvii. 98.  
 Lemnos. Hell, xviii. 88.  
 Lentino, Jacopo da. Purg. xxiv. 56.  
 Leopard, she-. Hell, i. 32.  
 Lericci. Purg. iii. 49.  
 Lethe. Hell, xiv. 131, 136; Purg. xxvi. 108; xxviii. 130; xxx. 143; xxxiii. 96, 123.  
 Levi. Purg. xvi. 132.  
 Liberality, examples of. Purg. xx. 31.  
 Libicocco, demon. Hell, xxi. 121; xxii. 70.  
 Libra, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. xxvii. 3.

- Libya. Hell, xxiv. 85.  
 Lily (flower-de-luce), arms of France. Purg. vii. 105.  
 Limbo. Hell, ii. 52; iv. 45; Purg. xxii. 14; Par. xxxii. 84.  
 Limoges. Purg. xxvi. 120.  
 Linus, the poet. Hell, iv. 141.  
 Linus, Pope. Par. xxvii. 41.  
 Lion. Hell, i. 45.  
 Lion, sign of the Zodiac. Par. xvi. 37; xxi. 14.  
 Livy. Hell, xxviii. 12.  
 Lizio. Purg. xiv. 97.  
 Loderingo degli Andalò. Hell, xxiii. 104.  
 Logodoro. Hell, xxii. 89.  
 Lombard dialect. Hell, xxvii. 20.  
 Lombard, the great, Bartolommeo della Scala. Par. xvii. 71.  
 Lombard, the simple, Guido da Castello. Purg. xvi. 126.  
 Lombardo, Marco. Purg. xvi. 46.  
 Lombards. Hell, xxii. 99.  
 Lombardy and the Marca Trivigiana. Hell, xxviii. 74; Purg. xvi. 115.  
 Louises, Kings of France. Purg. xx. 50.  
 Lovers. Par. viii.  
 Lucan. Hell, iv. 90; xxv. 94.  
 Lucca. Hell, xviii. 122; xxi. 40; xxxiii. 30; Purg. xxiv. 20.  
 Lucia, St. Hell, ii. 97; Purg. ix. 55; Par. xxxii. 137.  
 Lucifer. Hell, xxxi. 143; xxxiv. 89; Purg. xii. 25; Par. ix. 127; xix. 47; xxix. 56.  
 Lucretia. Hell, iv. 128; Par. vi. 41.  
 Luke, St. Purg. xxi. 7; xxix. 92.  
 Luni. Hell, xx. 47; Par. xvi. 73.  
 Lycurgus, King of Nemea. Purg. xxvi. 94.  
 Macarius, St. Par. xxii. 49.  
 Maccabees. Hell, xix. 86.  
 Maccabeus. Par. xviii. 40.  
 Maghinardo da Susinana. Hell, xxvii. 50.  
 Magra, river. Par. ix. 89.  
 Magus, Simon. Hell, xix. 1.  
 Mahomet. Hell, xxviii. 31, 62.  
 Maia (for the planet Mercury). Par. xxii. 144.  
 Mainardi, Arrigo. Purg. xiv. 97.  
 Mainardo, Pagani. Purg. xiv. 118.  
 Majorca. Hell, xxviii. 82; Par. xix. 137.  
 Malacoda, demon. Hell, xxi. 76, 79; xxiii. 141.  
 Malaspina, Corrado. Purg. viii. 65; 118.  
 Malatesta of Rimini. Hell, xxvii. 46.  
 Malatestino. Hell, xxviii. 81.  
 Malebolge. Hell, xviii. 1; xxi. 5; xxiv. 37; xxix. 41.  
 Malebranche, demons. Hell, xxi. 371  
 xxii. 100; xxxiii. 23; xxxiii. 142.  
 Malta, prison. Par. ix. 54.  
 Manfred, King of Apulia. Purg. iii. 112.  
 Manfredi, Aberigo de', of Faenza. Hell, xxxiii. 118.  
 Manfredi, Tribaldello de'. Hell, xxxii. 122.  
 Mangiadore, Peter. Par. xii. 134.  
 Manto. Hell, xx. 55; Purg. xxii. 113.  
 Mantua. Hell, xx. 93; Purg. vi. 72; xviii. 83.  
 Mantuan. (Virgil) Hell, ii. 58; Purg. vi. 74. (Sordello) Purg. vii. 86.  
 Mantuans. Hell, i. 69.  
 Marcabò. Hell, xxviii. 75.  
 Marcellus. Purg. vi. 125.  
 March of Ancona. Purg. v. 68.  
 March of Treviso. Purg. xvi. 115; Par. ix. 25.  
 Marchese, Messer. Purg. xxiv. 31.  
 Marcia, wife of Cato. Hell, iv. 128; Purg. i. 79.  
 Marco Lombardo. Purg. xvi. 46.  
 Maremma. Hell, xxv. 19; xxix. 48; Purg. v. 134.  
 Margaret, Queen of Aragon. Purg. vii. 128.  
 Marquis (Obizzo) da Este. Hell, xviii. 56.  
 Marquis (William) of Monferrato. Purg. vii. 134.  
 Mars. Hell, xiii. 144; xxiv. 145; xxxi. 51; Purg. xii. 31; Par. iv. 63; xviii. 132; xvi. 47; 145; xxii. 146.  
 Mars, planet. Purg. ii. 14; Par. iv. 63; xiv. 101; xvi. 38; xvii. 77; xxvii. 14.  
 Marseilles. Purg. xviii. 102.  
 Marsyas. Par. i. 20.  
 Martin IV., Pope. Purg. xxiv. 20.  
 Martin, Master. Par. xiii. 139.  
 Mary, Hebrew woman. Purg. xxiii. 30.  
 Mary, the Virgin. Purg. iii. 39; v. 101; viii. 37; x. 50; xiii. 50; xv. 88; xviii. 100; xx. 19, 97; xxii. 142; xxxiii. 6; Par. iii. 122; iv. 30; xi. 71; xiii. 84; xiv. 36; xv. 133; xvi. 34; xxiii. 111, 126, 137; xxxii. 4, 95, 104, 107, 113; xxxiii. 1, 34.  
 Marzucco. Purg. vi. 18.  
 Mascheroni, Sassol. Hell, xxxii. 65.  
 Matilda. Purg. xxviii. 40; xxxi. 92; xxxii. 28, 82; xxxiii. 119.  
 Matteo of Acquasparta, Cardinal. Par. xii. 124.  
 Matthias, St., Apostle. Hell, xix. 94.  
 Medea. Hell, xviii. 96.  
 Medicina, Pier da. Hell, xxviii. 73.  
 Mediterranean Sea. Par. ix. 82.

- Medusa. Hell, ix. 52.  
 Megaera. Hell, ix. 46.  
 Melchisedec. Par. viii. 125.  
 Meleager. Purg. xxv. 22.  
 Melicertes and Learchus, sons of Athamas. Hell, xxx. 5.  
 Melissa. Par. xiii. 125.  
 Menalippus. Hell, xxxii. 131.  
 Mercury. Par. iv. 63.  
 Mercury, planet. Par. v. 96.  
 Metellus. Purg. ix. 137.  
 Michael, Archangel. Hell, vii. 11;  
     Purg. xiii. 51; Par. iv. 47.  
 Michael Scott. Hell, xx. 116.  
 Michael Zanche. Hell, xxxii. 88; xxxiii.  
     144.  
 Michal, Saul's daughter. Purg. x. 68,  
     72.  
 Midas. Purg. xx. 106.  
 Midian. Purg. xxiv. 126.  
 Milan. Purg. xviii. 120.  
 Milanese. Purg. viii. 80.  
 Mincio. Hell, xx. 77.  
 Minerva. Purg. xxx. 68; Par. ii. 8.  
 Minos. Hell, v. 4; xiii. 96; xx. 36;  
     xxvii. 124; xxix. 120; Purg. i. 77;  
     Par. xiii. 14.  
 Minotaur. Hell, xii. 12, 25.  
 Mira, La. Purg. v. 79.  
 Miserere. Purg. v. 24.  
 Modena. Par. vi. 75.  
 Moldau. Purg. vii. 99.  
 Mondaldi and Filippeschi, families.  
     Purg. vi. 107.  
 Monferrato. Purg. vii. 136.  
 Mongibello (Mt. Aetna). Hell, xiv.  
     56; Par. viii. 70.  
 Montagna, cavalier. Hell, xxvii. 47.  
 Mont' Aperti. Hell, xxxii. 81.  
 Montecchi and Cappelletti, families.  
     Purg. vi. 106.  
 Monte Feltro. Purg. v. 88.  
 Montemalo (now Montemario). Par.  
     xv. 109.  
 Montemurlo. Par. xvi. 64.  
 Montereccione. Hell, xxxi. 41.  
 Montfort, Guy of. Hell, xii. 118.  
 Montone. Hell, xvi. 99.  
 Moon. Hell, x. 80; xix. 97; Par. xvi.  
     82.  
 Mordecai. Purg. xvii. 29.  
 Mordred, son of King Arthur. Hell,  
     xxxii. 61.  
 Morocco. Hell, xxvi. 104; Purg. iv.  
     139.  
 Moronto, brother of Cacciaguada. Par.  
     xv. 136.  
 Mosca (degli Uberti, or Lamberti).  
     Hell, vi. 80; xxviii. 106.  
 Moses. Hell, iv. 57; Purg. xxxii. 80;  
     Par. iv. 29; xxiv. 136; xxvi. 41.  
 Mozzi, Andrea dei. Hell, xv. 112.  
 Muses. Hell, ii. 7; xxxii. 10; Purg.  
     i. 8; xxii. 102; xxix. 37; Par. ii. 9;  
     xii. 7; xxxii. 56.  
 Mucius (Scaevola). Par. iv. 84.  
 Myrrha. Hell, xxx. 38.  
 Naiades. Purg. xxxiii. 49.  
 Naples. Purg. iii. 27.  
 Narcissus. Hell, xxx. 128; Par. iii. 18.  
 Nasidius. Hell, xxv. 95.  
 Nathan, Prophet. Par. xii. 136.  
 Navarre. Hell, xxii. 48; Par. xix.  
     143.  
 Navarrese, the (Ciampolo). Hell, xxii.  
     48, 121.  
 Nazareth. Par. ix. 137.  
 Nebuchadnezzar. Par. iv. 14.  
 Negligent of repentance, the. Purg.  
     ii. to vii.  
 Nella, wife of Forese. Purg. xxxiii. 87.  
 Neptune. Hell, xxviii. 83; Par. xxxiii.  
     96.  
 Neri, Black Party. Hell, vi. 64.  
 Nerli, family. Par. xv. 115.  
 Nessus. Hell, xii. 67, 98, 115; xiii. 1.  
 Niccolò (Salimbeni) of Siena. Hell,  
     xxxix. 127.  
 Nicholas, St., of Bari. Purg. xx. 32.  
 Nicholas III., Pope. Hell, xix. 70.  
 Nicosia. Par. xix. 146.  
 Nile. Hell, xxxiv. 45; Purg. xxiv. 64;  
     Par. vi. 66.  
 Nimrod. Hell, xxxi. 77; Purg. xii.  
     34; Par. xxvi. 126.  
 Nino de' Visconti, of Pisa. Purg. viii.  
     53, 109.  
 Ninus. Hell, v. 59.  
 Niobe. Queen of Thebes. Purg. xii.  
     37.  
 Nisus. Hell, i. 108.  
 Noah. Hell, iv. 56; Par. xii. 17.  
 Nocera. Par. xi. 48.  
 Noli. Purg. iv. 25.  
 Normandy. Purg. xx. 66.  
 Norway. Par. xix. 139.  
 Notary, the, Jacopo da Lentino. Purg.  
     xxiv. 56.  
 Novarese, the. Hell, xxviii. 59.  
 Novello, Federigo. Purg. vi. 17.  
 Numidia. Purg. xxxi. 72.  
 Nymphs, Naiades. Purg. xxix. 4;  
     xxxi. 106.  
 Nymphs, stars. Par. xxxii. 26.  
 Nymphs, Virtues. Purg. xxxii. 98.  
 Obizzo of Esti. Hell, xii. 111; xviii.  
 Octavian Augustus. Hell, i. 71; Purg.  
     vii. 6.  
 Oderisi of Gubbio. Purg. xi. 79.  
 Olympus. Purg. xxiv. 15.  
 Umberto of Santafore. Purg. xi. 67.  
 Ordelaifi of Forlì. Hell, xxvii. 45.  
 Orestes. Purg. xiii. 32.  
 Oriaco. Purg. v. 80.

- Ormanni, family. Par. xvi. 89.  
 Orpheus. Hell, iv. 140.  
 Orsini, family. Hell, xix. 70.  
 Orso, Count. Purg. vi. 19.  
 Ostia. Purg. ii. 100.  
 Ostia, Cardinal of. Par. xii. 83.  
 Ottocar, King of Bohemia. Purg. vii. 100.  
 Ovid. Hell, iv. 90; xxv. 97.
- Pachynus. Par. viii. 68.  
 Padua. Par. ix. 46.  
 Paduans. Hell, xv. 7.  
 Pagani, family. Purg. xiv. 118.  
 Palazzo, Corrado da. Purg. xvi. 124.  
 Palermo. Par. viii. 75.  
 Palestrina. Hell, xxvii. 102.  
 Palladium. Hell, xxvi. 63.  
 Pallas (Minerva). Purg. xii. 31.  
 Pallas, son of Evander. Par. vi. 36.  
 Paradise, Terrestrial. Purg. xxviii.  
 Paris, city. Purg. xi. 81; xx. 52.  
 Paris, Trojan. Hell, v. 67.  
 Parmenides. Par. xiii. 125.  
 Parnassus. Purg. xxii. 65, 104; xxviii. 141; xxxi. 141; Par. i. 16.  
 Pasiphaë. Hell, xii. 13; Purg. xxvi. 41, 86.  
 Paul, Apostle. Hell, ii. 32; Purg. xxix. 134; Par. xviii. 131; xxi. 127; xxiv. 62; xxviii. 138.  
 Paulus Orosius. Par. x. 119.  
 Pazzi, family. (Rinier Pazzo) Hell, xii. 137. (Camicion de' Pazzi) Hell, xxxii. 68.  
 Pear, family of the (the Peruzzi). Par. xvi. 126.  
 Peculators. Hell, xxi.; xxii.  
 Pegasea (Calliope). Par. xviii. 82.  
 Peleus. Hell, xxxi. 5.  
 Pelican (Christ). Par. xxv. 113.  
 Pelorus. Purg. xiv. 32; Par. viii. 68.  
 Penelope. Hell, xxvi. 96.  
 Penthesilea. Hell, iv. 124.  
 Perillus. Hell, xxvii. 7.  
 Persians. Par. xix. 112.  
 Persius. Purg. xxii. 100.  
 Perugia. Par. vi. 75; xi. 46.  
 Peschiera. Hell, xx. 70.  
 Peter, St., Apostle. Hell, i. 134; ii. 24; xix. 91; Purg. ix. 127; xiii. 51; xix. 99; xxi. 54; xxii. 63; xxxii. 76; Par. ix. 141; xi. 130; xviii. 131; xxi. 127; xxii. 88; xxiii. 139; xxiv. 59, 115, 124, 153; xxv. 12; xxvii. 49; xxxii. 124, 133.  
 Peter, St., Church of. Hell, xviii. 32; xxxi. 59.  
 Peter Damian. Par. xxi. 122.  
 Peter Lombard. Par. x. 107.  
 Peter Mangiadore. Par. xii. 134.  
 Peter of Aragon. Purg. vii. 112; 125.  
 Peter of Spain. Par. xii. 134.
- Peter a sinner. Par. xxi. 127.  
 Pettignano, Pier. Purg. xiii. 128.  
 Phaedra. Par. xvii. 47.  
 Phaethon. Hell, xvii. 107; Purg. iv. 72; xxix. 118; Par. xvii. 3; xxxi. 125.  
 Phalaris. Hell, xxvii. 7.  
 Phareae, serpents. Hell, xxiv. 86.  
 Pharisees. Hell, xxiii. 116; xxvii. 85.  
 Pharsalia. Par. vi. 65.  
 Philippo Argenti. Hell, viii. 61.  
 Philip III., the Bold, of France. Purg. vi. 20; vii. 103.  
 Philip IV., the Fair, of France. Hell, xix. 87; Purg. vii. 109; xx. 50, 86; xxxii. 152; Par. xix. 120.  
 Philips, Kings of France. Purg. xx. 50.  
 Phlegethon. Hell, xiv. 116, 131.  
 Phlegra. Hell, xiv. 58.  
 Phlegyas. Hell, viii. 19, 24.  
 Phoenicia. Par. xxvii. 83.  
 Phoenix. Hell, xxiv. 107.  
 Pholus. Hell, xii. 72.  
 Photinus. Hell, xi. 9.  
 Phyllis. Par. ix. 100.  
 Pia of Siena. Purg. v. 133.  
 Piave, river. Par. ix. 27.  
 Piccarda de' Donati. Purg. xxiv. 10; Par. iii. 49; iv. 97.  
 Piceno, Campo. Hell, xxiv. 148.  
 Pier da Medicina. Hell, xxviii. 73.  
 Pier Pettignano. Purg. xiii. 128.  
 Pier Traversaro. Purg. xiv. 98.  
 Pier delle Vigne. Hell, xiii. 32.  
 Pierre de la Brosse. Purg. vi. 22.  
 Pietola. Purg. xviii. 83.  
 Pietrapana. Hell, xxxi. 29.  
 Pigli, family. Par. xvi. 103.  
 Pila, Ubaldin dalla. Purg. xxiv. 29.  
 Pilate, the modern (Philip the Fair). Purg. xx. 91.  
 Pinamonte, Buonacorsi. Hell, xx. 96.  
 Pine-cone of St. Peter's. Hell, xxxi. 90.  
 Pisa. Hell, xxxiii. 79; Purg. vi. 17.  
 Pisans. Hell, xxxiii. 30; Purg. xiv. 53.  
 Pisistratus. Purg. xv. 101.  
 Pistoia. Hell, xxiv. 126, 143; xxv. 10.  
 Pius I. Par. xxvii. 44.  
 Plato. Hell, iv. 134; Purg. iii. 43; Par. iv. 24, 49.  
 Plautus. Purg. xxii. 98.  
 Pluto. Hell, vi. 115.  
 Po. Hell, v. 98; xx. 78; Purg. xiv. 92; xvi. 115; Par. vi. 51; xv. 137.  
 Pola. Hell, ix. 113.  
 Pole, North. Purg. i. 29.  
 Pole, South. Purg. i. 23.  
 Polenta, family. Hell, xxvii. 41.  
 Pollux, Castor and. Purg. iv. 61.  
 Polycletus. Purg. x. 32.

- Polydorus. Hell, xxx. 18; Purg. xx.  
 115.  
 Polyhymnia. Par. xxxiii. 56.  
 Polymnestor. Purg. xx. 115.  
 Polynices. Hell, xxvi. 54; Purg. xxii.  
 56.  
 Polyxena. Hell, xxx. 17.  
 Pompey the Great. Par. vi. 53.  
 Ponthieu. Purg. xx. 66.  
 Porta Sole of Perugia. Par. xi. 47.  
 Portugal. Par. xix. 139.  
 Potiphar's wife. Hell, xxx. 97.  
 Poverty, examples of. Purg. xx. 22.  
 Powers, order of angels. Par. xxviii.  
 123.  
 Prague. Par. xix. 117.  
 Prata, Guido da. Purg. xiv. 104.  
 Prato. Hell, xxvi. 9.  
 Pratomagno. Purg. v. 116.  
 Preachers, rebuked. Par. xxix. 90.  
 Pressa (della), family. Par. xvi. 100.  
 Priam, King of Troy. Hell, xxx. 15,  
 114.  
 Priest, the High, Boniface VIII. Hell,  
 xxvii. 70.  
 Primum Mobile. Par. xxvii. 68, 99,  
 118.  
 Princes, order of angels. Par. viii. 34;  
 xxviii. 125.  
 Priscian. Hell, xv. 109.  
 Prodigal, the. Hell, vii.  
 Progne. Purg. xvii. 19.  
 Proserpine. Hell, ix. 44; x. 80; Purg.  
 xxviii. 50.  
 Proud, the. Purg. x.; xi.; xii.  
 Provençals, the. Par. vi. 130.  
 Provence. Purg. vii. 126; xx. 61; Par.  
 viii. 58.  
 Provenzan Salvani. Purg. xi. 121.  
 Psalmist David. Purg. x. 65.  
 Ptolemy, the astronomer. Hell, iv.  
 142.  
 Ptolemy, King of Egypt. Par. vi. 69.  
 Ptolomaea. Hell, xxxiii. 124.  
 Puccio Sciancato. Hell, xxv. 148.  
 Pygmalion. Purg. xx. 103.  
 Pyramus. Purg. xxvii. 38; xxxiii. 69.  
 Pyrenees. Par. xix. 144.  
 Pyrrhus. Hell, xii. 135; Par. vi. 44.  
  
 Quarnaro, Gulf of. Hell, ix. 113.  
 Quinctius (Cincinnatus). Par. vi. 46.  
 Quirinus (Romulus). Par. viii. 131.  
  
 Raban. Par. xii. 139.  
 Rachel. Hell, ii. 102; iv. 60; Purg.  
 xxvii. 104; Par. xxxii. 8.  
 Rahab. Par. ix. 116.  
 Ram, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. viii.  
 134; Par. xxix. 2.  
 Raphael, Archangel. Par. iv. 48.  
 Rascia, part of the modern Servia.  
 Par. xix. 140.  
  
 Ravenna. Hell, v. 97; xxvii. 40; Par.  
 vi. 61; xxi. 123.  
 Ravnani, family. Par. xvi. 97.  
 Raymond Beranger. Par. vi. 134.  
 Rebecca. Par. xxxii. 10.  
 Red Sea. Hell, xxiv. 90; Purg. xviii.  
 134; Par. vi. 79.  
 Rehoboam. Purg. xii. 46.  
 Reno, river. Hell, xviii. 61; Purg.  
 xiv. 92.  
 Renouard. Par. xviii. 46.  
 Resurrection of the body. Par. vii.  
 146; xiv. 43.  
 Rhea. Hell, xiv. 100.  
 Rhine, the. Par. vi. 58.  
 Rhipeus, the Trojan. Par. xx. 68.  
 Rhodope, she of (Phyllis). Par. ix.  
 100.  
 Rhone, the. Hell, ix. 112; Par. vi. 60;  
 viii. 59.  
 Rialto (Venice). Par. ix. 26.  
 Riccardo da Camino. Par. ix. 50.  
 Richard of St. Victor. Par. x. 131.  
 Rimini. Hell, xxviii. 86.  
 Rinier of Calboli. Purg. xiv. 38.  
 Rinier of Corneto. Hell, xii. 137.  
 Rinier Pazzo. Hell, xii. 137.  
 Rhiphaean Mountains. Purg. xxvi. 43.  
 Robert Guiscard. Hell, xviii. 14; Par.  
 xviii. 48.  
 Robert, King of Apulia. Par. viii.  
 76.  
 Roland. Hell, xxxi. 18; Par. xviii.  
 43.  
 Romagna. Hell, xxvii. 37; xxxiii. 154;  
 Purg. v. 69; xiv. 92; xv. 44.  
 Romagnuoli. Hell, xxvii. 28; Purg.  
 xiv. 99.  
 Roman buildings. Par. xv. 106.  
 Roman Church. Hell, xix. 57; Par.  
 xvii. 72.  
 Roman Emperors. Purg. xxxii. 112.  
 Roman Kings. Par. vi. 47.  
 Roman Prince, Trajan. Purg. x. 76.  
 Romans. Hell, xv. 77; xviii. 28; xxvi.  
 60; xxviii. 28; Par. vi. 44; xix.  
 102.  
 Roman Shepherd, Pope Adrian V.  
 Purg. xix. 107.  
 Roman women, ancient. Purg. xxii.  
 145.  
 Rome, city. Hell, i. 71; ii. 20; xiv.  
 105; xxxi. 59; Purg. vi. 112; xvi.  
 106, 127; xviii. 80; xxi. 89; xxix.  
 115; xxxii. 149; Par. vi. 57; ix. 140;  
 xv. 126; xvi. 10; xxiv. 63; xxvii. 25,  
 62; xxxi. 34.  
 Romena. Hell, xxx. 73.  
 Romeo of Provence. Par. vi. 128, 135.  
 Romuald, St. Par. xxii. 49.  
 Romulus (Quirinus). Par. viii. 131.  
 Roncesvalles. Hell, xxxi. 16.  
 Rose, the Heavenly. Par. xxx.; xxxi.



- Rubaconte, the bridge. Purg. xii. 102.  
 Rubicante, demon. Hell, xxi. 123; xxii. 40.  
 Rubicon. Par. vi. 62.  
 Rudolph of Hapsburg. Purg. vi. 103; vii. 94; Par. viii. 72.  
 Ruggieri, degli Ubaldini, Archbishop of Pisa. Hell, xxxiii. 14.  
 Rulers, just. Par. xviii.  
 Rusticucci, Jacopo. Hell, vi. 80; xvi. 44.  
 Ruth. Par. xxxii. 10.  
 Sabellius. Par. xiii. 127.  
 Sabellus. Hell, xxv. 95.  
 Sabine women. Par. vi. 40.  
 Sacchetti, family. Par. xvi. 104.  
 Saint Victor, Hugh of. Par. xii. 133.  
 Sauts of the Old and New Testament. Par. xxxii.  
 Saladin. Hell, iv. 129.  
 Salimbeni, Niccolò. Hell, xxix. 127.  
 Salterello, Lapo. Par. xv. 128.  
 Salvani, Provenzan. Purg. xi. 121.  
 Samaria, woman of. Purg. xxi. 3.  
 Samuel, Prophet. Par. iv. 29.  
 San Miniato. Purg. xii. 101.  
 Sanleo. Purg. iv. 25.  
 Sannella, family. Par. xvi. 92.  
 Sant' Andrea, Jacomo da. Hell, xiii. 133.  
 Santafiore, Counts of. Purg. vi. 111; xi. 58.  
 Santerno. Hell, xxvii. 49.  
 Saône, river. Par. vi. 59.  
 Sapia, lady of Siena. Purg. xiii. 109.  
 Sapphira and Ananias. Purg. xx. 112.  
 Saracens. Hell, xxvii. 87; (Saracen women) Purg. xxiii. 103.  
 Sara, wife of Abraham. Par. xxxii. 10.  
 Sardanapalus. Par. xv. 107.  
 Sardinia. Hell, xxii. 89; xxvi. 104; xxix. 48; Purg. xviii. 81; xxiii. 94.  
 Sassol Mascheroni. Hell, xxxii. 65.  
 Satan. Hell, vii. 1.  
 Saturn. Hell, xiv. 96; Par. xxi. 26.  
 Saturn, the planet. Purg. xix. 3; Par. xxi. 13; xxii. 146.  
 Saul. Purg. xii. 40.  
 Savena, river. Hell, xviii. 61.  
 Savio, river. Hell, xxvii. 52.  
 Scaevola, Mucius. Par. iv. 84.  
 Scala, Alberto della. Purg. xviii. 121.  
 Scala, Bartolommeo della. Par. xvii. 71.  
 Scala, Can Grande della. Par. xvii. 76.  
 Scales, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. ii. 5; Par. xxix. 2.  
 Scarmiglione, demon. Hell, xxi. 105.  
 Schicchi, Gianni. Hell, xxx. 32.  
 Schismatics. Hell, xxviii. ; xxix. Sciancato, Puccio. Hell, xxv. 148.  
 Scipio, Africanus. Hell, xxxi. 116; Purg. xxix. 116; Par. vi. 53; xxvii. 61.  
 Slavonian winds. Purg. xxx. 87.  
 Scorpio, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. ix. 5; xxv. 3.  
 Scot, the. Par. xix. 122.  
 Scott, Michael. Hell, xx. 116.  
 Scrovigni, family. Hell, xvii. 64.  
 Scyros. Purg. ix. 37.  
 Seducers. Hell, xviii.  
 Seine, the. Par. vi. 59; xix. 118.  
 Semele. Hell, xxx. 2; Par. xxi. 6.  
 Semiramis. Hell, v. 58.  
 Seneca. Hell, iv. 141.  
 Sennacherib. Purg. xii. 53.  
 Seraph. Par. xxi. 92.  
 Seraphim. Par. iv. 28; viii. 27; ix. 77; xxviii. 72, 99.  
 Serchio, river. Hell, xxi. 49.  
 Serpents of Libya. Hell, xxiv. 85.  
 Sestos. Purg. xxviii. 74.  
 Seven Kings against Thebes. Hell, xiv. 68.  
 Seville. Hell, xx. 126; xxvi. 110.  
 Sextus I., Pope. Par. xxvii. 44.  
 Sextus (Tarquinius). Hell, xii. 135.  
 Shinar. Purg. xii. 36.  
 Sibyl, Cumaean. Par. xxxiii. 66.  
 Sichaeus. Hell, v. 62; Par. ix. 98.  
 Sicilian Vespers. Par. viii. 75.  
 Sicily. Hell, xii. 108; Purg. iii. 116; Par. viii. 67; xix. 131.  
 Siena. Hell, xxix. 109; Purg. v. 134; xi. 111, 123.  
 Sieneze. Hell, xxix. 122, 134; Purg. xi. 65; xiii. 115, 151.  
 Siestri. Purg. xix. 100.  
 Sigier. Par. x. 136.  
 Sile, river. Par. ix. 49.  
 Silvius. Hell, ii. 13.  
 Simifonti. Par. xvi. 62.  
 Simois, river. Par. vi. 67.  
 Simon Magus. Hell, xix. 1; Par. xxx. 147.  
 Simoniacs. Hell, xix.  
 Simonides. Purg. xxii. 107.  
 Sinigaglia. Par. xvi. 75.  
 Sinon the Greek. Hell, xxx. 98.  
 Siren. Purg. xix. 19.  
 Sirens. Purg. xxxi. 45; Par. xii. 8.  
 Sirocco. Purg. xxviii. 21.  
 Sismondi, family. Hell, xxxiii. 32.  
 Sizii, family. Par. xvi. 108.  
 Slothful, the. Hell, vii. ; viii. ; Purg. xvii. ; xviii.  
 Socrates. Hell, iv. 134.  
 Sodom. Hell, xi. 50; Purg. xxvi. 40, 79.  
 Sodomites. Hell, xv.  
 Soldanier, Gianni del. Hell, xxxii. 121.



- Soldanieri, family. Par. xvi. 93.  
 Solitary and Contemplative, the. Par. xxi.  
 Solomon. Par. x. 109; xiii. 48, 89; xiv. 35.  
 Solon. Par. viii. 124.  
 Soothsayers. Hell, xx.  
 Soracte. Hell, xxvii. 95.  
 Sordello. Purg. vi. 74; vii. 3, 52, 85; viii. 38, 62, 94; ix. 58.  
 Sorgue, river. Par. viii. 59.  
 Sow, arms of the Scrovigni. Hell, xvii. 64.  
 Spain. Hell, xxvi. 103; Purg. xviii. 102; Par. vi. 64; xii. 46; xix. 125.  
 Spaniards. Par. xxix. 101.  
 Sphinx. Purg. xxxiii. 43.  
 Spirit, Holy. Purg. xx. 98; Par. iii. 53.  
 Stars, fixed. Par. xxii.  
 Stars, last word of Hell, Purg., Par.  
 Stars of the South Polar region. Purg. i. 23.  
 Statius. Purg. xxi. 10, 91; xxii. 25, 64; xxiv. 119; xxv. 29; xxvii. 47; xxxii. 29; xxxiii. 134.  
 Statue of Time, source of Acheron, Styx, Phlegethon. Hell, xiv. 103.  
 Stephen, St. Purg. xv. 106.  
 Stigmata of St. Francis. Par. xi. 107.  
 Street of Straw (Rue du Fouarre). Par. x. 137.  
 Stricca. Hell, xxix. 125.  
 Strophades. Hell, xiii. 11.  
 Styx. Hell, vii. 109; ix. 81; xiv. 116.  
 Suabia. Par. iii. 119.  
 Suicides. Hell, xiii.  
 Sultan. Hell, v. 60; xxvii. 90; Par. xi. 101.  
 Sylvester, Fra. Par. xi. 83.  
 Sylvester, St., Pope. Hell, xix. 117; xxvii. 94; Par. xx. 57.  
 Syrinx. Purg. xxxii. 65.  
 Tacco, Ghin di. Purg. vi. 14.  
 Tagliacozzo. Hell, xxviii. 17.  
 Tagliamento, river. Par. ix. 44.  
 Talamone. Purg. xiii. 152.  
 Tambernich. Hell, xxxii. 28.  
 Tarlati, Cione de'. Purg. vi. 15.  
 Tarpeian Rock. Purg. ix. 137.  
 Tarquin. Hell, iv. 127.  
 Tartars. Hell, xvii. 17.  
 Taurus, sign of the Zodiac. Purg. xxv. 3; Par. xxii. 111.  
 Tegghiaio Aldobrandi. Hell, vi. 79; xvi. 41.  
 Temple, the. Purg. xx. 93.  
 Terence. Purg. xxii. 97.  
 Tesoro of Brunetto Latini. Hell, xv. 119.  
 Thaddeus. Par. xii. 83.  
 Thaïs. Hell, xviii. 133.  
 Thales. Hell, iv. 137.  
 Thames, the. Hell, xii. 120.  
 Thaumás. Purg. xxi. 50.  
 Thebaid, poem of Statius. Purg. xxi. 92.  
 Theban blood. Hell, xxx. 2.  
 Thebans. Hell, xx. 32; Purg. xviii. 93.  
 Thebes. Hell, xiv. 69; xx. 59; xxv. 15; xxx. 22; xxxii. 11; xxxiii. 89; Purg. xxi. 92; xxii. 89.  
 Thebes, modern (Pisa). Hell, xxxiii. 89.  
 Themis. Purg. xxxiii. 47.  
 Theologians. Par. x.  
 Theseus. Hell, ix. 54; xii. 17; Purg. xxiv. 123.  
 Thetis. Purg. ix. 37; xxii. 113.  
 Thibault II., King. Hell, xxxii. 52.  
 Thieves. Hell, xxiv.  
 Thisbe. Purg. xxvii. 37.  
 Thoas and Euneos. Purg. xxvi. 95.  
 Thomas, St., Apostle. Par. xvi. 129.  
 Thomas Aquinas. Purg. xx. 69; Par. x. 82; xii. 110, 144; xiii. 32; xiv. 6.  
 Throne and Crown for Henry VII. of Luxemburg. Par. xxx. 137.  
 Thrones, order of angels. Par. ix. 61; xxviii. 104.  
 Thymbraeus (Apollo). Purg. xii. 31.  
 Tiber. Hell, xxvii. 30; Purg. ii. 101; Par. xi. 106.  
 Tiberius Caesar. Par. vi. 86.  
 Tignoso, Federico. Purg. xiv. 106.  
 Tigris, the. Purg. xxxiii. 112.  
 Timaeus, the, of Plato. Par. iv. 49.  
 Tiresias. Hell, xx. 40; Purg. xxii. 113.  
 Tisiphone. Hell, ix. 48.  
 Tithonus. Purg. ix. 1.  
 Titus, Emperor. Purg. xxi. 82; Par. vi. 92.  
 Tityus. Hell, xxxi. 124.  
 Tobias. Par. iv. 48.  
 Tomyris. Purg. xii. 56.  
 Toppo, the. Hell, xiii. 121.  
 Torquatus, Titus Manlius. Par. vi. 46.  
 Tours. Purg. xxiv. 23.  
 Traitors. Hell, xxxii.; xxxiii.; xxxiv.  
 Trajan, Emperor. Purg. x. 76; Par. xx. 44, 112.  
 Transfiguration, the. Purg. xxxii. 73.  
 Traversara, family. Purg. xiv. 107.  
 Traversaro, Pier. Purg. xiv. 98.  
 Trent. Hell, xii. 5.  
 Trentine Pastor. Hell, xx. 67.  
 Trespiano. Par. xvi. 54.  
 Tribaldello. Hell, xxxii. 122.  
 Trinacria (Sicily). Par. viii. 67.  
 Trinity, the. Par. xiii. 26; xxxiii. 115.  
 Tristan. Hell, v. 67.  
 Trivia (Diana). Par. xxxiii. 26.

- Troad, mountains of the. Par. vi. 6.  
 Trojan Furies. Hell, xxx. 22.  
 Trojans. Hell, xiii. 11; xxx. 14; Purg. xviii. 136; Par. xv. 126.  
 Tronto, river. Par. viii. 63.  
 Troy. Hell, i. 74; xxx. 98. 114; Purg. xii. 61.  
 Tully. Hell, iv. 141.  
 Tupino, river. Par. xi. 43.  
 Turbia. Purg. iii. 49.  
 Turks. Hell, xvii. 17; Par. xv. 145.  
 Turnus. Hell, i. 108.  
 Tuscan language. Purg. xvi. 137.  
 Tuscan (Dante). Hell, xxiii. 91; xxxii. 66.  
 Tuscans. Hell, xxii. 99; Purg. xi. 58.  
 Tuscany. Hell, xxiv. 122; Purg. xi. 110; xiii. 149; xiv. 16.  
 Tydeus. Hell, xxxii. 130.  
 Typhoeus. Par. viii. 70.  
 Typhon. Hell, xxxi. 124.  
 Tyrants. Hell, xii. 103.  
 Tyrol. Hell, xx. 63.  
 Ubaldin dalla Pila. Purg. xxiv. 29.  
 Ubaldini, Octaviano degli. Hell, x. 120.  
 Ubaldini, Ruggieri degli. Hell, xxxiii. 14.  
 Ubaldo, St., of Gubbio. Par. xi. 44.  
 Uberti, family. Par. xvi. 109.  
 Ubertino, Donati. Par. xvi. 119.  
 Ubertino, Frate. Par. xii. 124.  
 Ubriachi, family. Hell, xvii. 62.  
 Uccellatoio, Mount. Par. xv. 110.  
 Ughi, family. Par. xvi. 88.  
 Ugolin d' Azzo. Purg. xiv. 105.  
 Ugolin de' Fantoli. Purg. xiv. 121.  
 Ugolino della Gherardesca. Hell, xxxiii. 13.  
 Uguccione. Hell, xxxiii. 89.  
 Ulysses. Hell, xxvi. 56; Purg. xix. 22; Par. xxvii. 83.  
 Unbelievers. Hell, x.  
 Urania. Purg. xxix. 41.  
 Urban I. Par. xxvii. 44.  
 Urbino. Hell, xxvii. 29.  
 Urbisaglia. Par. xvi. 73.  
 Usurers. Hell, xvii. 44.  
 Utica. Purg. i. 74.  
 Uzzah. Purg. x. 57.  
 Val Camonica. Hell, xx. 65.  
 Valdarno, in Tuscany. Purg. xiv. 30.  
 Valdiciana, in Tuscany. Hell, xxix. 47.  
 Valdigreve, in Tuscany. Par. xvi. 66.  
 Val di Magra. Hell, xxiv. 145; Purg. viii. 116.  
 Vanni Fucci. Hell, xxiv. 125.  
 Var, river. Par. vi. 58.  
 Varro. Purg. xxii. 98.  
 Vatican. Par. ix. 139.  
 Vecchio, family of the. Par. xv. 119.  
 Venetians, arsenal of the. Hell, xxi. 7.  
 Venice, coin of. Par. xix. 141.  
 Venus. Purg. xxv. 132; xxviii. 65.  
 Venus, planet. Purg. i. 19; Par. viii. 11; ix. 33.  
 Vercelli. Hell, xxviii. 75.  
 Verde, river. Purg. iii. 131; Par. viii. 63.  
 Verona. Hell, xv. 122; Purg. xviii. 118.  
 Veronica, the. Par. xxxi. 104.  
 Verrucchio. Hell, xxvii. 46.  
 Veso, Mount. Hell, xvi. 95.  
 Vespers, Sicilian. Par. viii. 75.  
 Vicenza. Par. ix. 47.  
 Vigne, Pier delle. Hell, xiii. 32.  
 Violators of monastic vows. Par. iii.  
 Violent, the, against others. Hell, xii.; against themselves, xiii.; against God, xiv.; against Nature, xv.; xvi.; against Art, xvii.  
 Viper, arms of the Milanese Visconti. Purg. viii. 80.  
 Virgil. Hell, i. 79; Purg. iii. 74; vii. 7; viii. 64; xviii. 82, 112; Par. xv. 26; xvii. 19; xxvi. 118.  
 Virtues, order of angels. Par. xxviii. 122.  
 Visconti of Milan. Purg. viii. 80.  
 Visconti of Pisa. Purg. viii. 53, 109.  
 Visdomini, family. Par. xvi. 112.  
 Vision, the beatific. Par. xxxiii.  
 Vitaliano del Dente. Hell, xvii. 68.  
 Vows, not performed. Par. iv. 137.  
 Vulcan. Hell, xiv. 52.  
 Wain, Charles's. Hell, xi. 114; Purg. i. 30; Par. xiii. 7.  
 Wenceslaus IV., of Bohemia. Purg. vii. 101; Par. xix. 125.  
 Will, free. Purg. xvi. 76; xviii. 74.  
 William, Marquis of Monferrato. Purg. vii. 134.  
 Wissant. Hell, xv. 4.  
 Xerxes. Purg. xxviii. 71; Par. viii. 124.  
 Zanche, Michael. Hell, xxii. 88; xxxiii. 144.  
 Zara, game of hazard. Purg. vi. 1.  
 Zeno, Hell, iv. 138.  
 Zeno, San, monastery at Verona. Purg. xviii. 118.  
 Zephyr. Par. xii. 47.  
 Zion, Mount. Purg. iv. 68.  
 Zita, Saint. Hell, xxi. 38.  
 Zodiac. Purg. iv. 64; Par. x. 14.



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